



July 16, 2008

The Honorable Ed Schafer
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Schafer:

National Farmers Union (NFU) members were very disappointed to learn of the temporary restraining order issued to the National Wildlife Federation and its affiliates last week relative to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Critical Feed Use program. Your announcement on May 27 to open certain CRP acreage for haying and grazing was welcome to livestock producers across the country faced with a shortage of forage resources due to prolonged drought conditions and higher feed costs.

Farmers and ranchers enrolled in this program with a good-faith understanding they could graze or hay the CRP acreage following the primary nesting season for wildlife. Through the enrollment process, producers committed to meeting stringent operational management requirements to preserve the integrity of the CRP ground. While many producers already had livestock on CRP acreages, others were awaiting the conclusion of the nesting period. Due to the restraining order, producers have been forced to remove their livestock from the CRP acreage and quickly arrange for alternative feeding resources.

I hope the July 17 U.S. District Court hearing, to determine whether the Wildlife Federations receive a preliminary injunction, results in a sound rejection of the request. Livestock producers do not have the luxury of time when it comes to feeding their herds.

NFU wholly supports the Department's efforts to continue the Critical Feed Use program and looks forward to working with you to ensure livestock producers have readily available access to feed for their livestock.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Buis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "B".

Tom Buis, President
National Farmers Union