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January 28, 2009

The Honorable Tim Johnson
The Honorable Mike Enzi
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sirs:

The U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) applauds your leadership in introducing the Foot and Mouth Disease Prevention Act. This bill would prohibit the importation of ruminants and swine and fresh or frozen ruminant and pork products from any region of Argentina until the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) can certify to Congress that Argentina is free of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

This bill is extremely important as it protects the U.S. cattle herd from FMD. If FMD infiltrates our borders, entire herds would be destroyed leaving ranchers in financial ruin. Furthermore, the scare would immediately shut global markets to U.S. beef products, a move that would have a disastrous economic effect on rural economies.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has deemed FMD the most economically devastating of all livestock disease. A recent study by Kansas State University found that an outbreak of FMD would cost the State of Kansas alone nearly \$1 billion.

Despite the risks, the Department of Agriculture continues to consider the implementation of a regionalized beef trade plan with Argentina. FMD is an airborne disease that will not stop at an imaginary border controlled by a foreign nation. Argentina has proven time and time again that it does not have America's best interests at heart. This is a country that has attacked U.S. agriculture in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and has intentionally turned its back on, and still refuses to pay, billions in U.S. loans despite U.S. court judgments mandating it do so.

USCA is committed to working with you and moving this bill forward by garnering support both on Capitol Hill and in the country. USCA is firmly resolved to ensuring the U.S. cattle industry is protected by the highest import standards possible, and to seeing that this bill becomes law.

Sincerely,

Jon Wooster, President

cc: U.S. House Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson
U.S. Senate Agriculture Chairman Tom Harkin