

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 15, 2023

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

On January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the proposed rule titled “Use of Electronic Identification Eartags as Official Identification in Cattle and Bison.” The publishing of the rule provided for 60 days of public comment which is set to close on March 20, 2023. We feel that the 60-day timeframe for comment is not of sufficient length to allow for thorough comment on such an important issue to cattle producers across the country, and thereby request a 30-day extension of the comment period.

It has been noted by APHIS that the proposed traceability rule as written would only apply to about 11% of the United States’ cattle herd. However, should APHIS ultimately move forward with adopting the rule, its implementation would not impact all states equally. Wyoming, for example, has very little in the way of in-state slaughter or confined feeding capacity. The overwhelming majority of Wyoming’s cattle are raised on the open range. When producers are ready to sell their stock, especially if they are selling to a feeder or directly to a slaughterhouse, a significant number of Wyoming cattle are sold and shipped out-of-state. They are sent to states located in the Midwest and south-central regions of the country, where the majority of America’s feeding and slaughter capacities are located. This is particularly true of older cull cows and bulls which are still sexually intact.

Cattle producers in Wyoming are about to become very busy with calving season as the weather warms, and many simply do not have even a brief few minutes to spare to submit comments on the proposed rule. For these reasons, we request that the current comment period be extended an additional 30 days. Thank you for your prompt consideration.

Sincerely,



John Barrasso, M.D.  
United States Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis  
United States Senator



Harriet Hageman  
Congresswoman

CC: Under Secretary Jennifer Moffitt  
USDA Marketing and Regulatory Programs

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