



March 16, 2012

USDA/APHIS/AC
4700 River Road
Riverdale, MD 20737-1234

Dear Dr. Parham:

This letter is being submitted by the National Chicken Council, National Turkey Federation, United Egg Producers, USA Poultry and Egg Export Council, and U.S. Poultry & Egg Association to urge funding and support of the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP).

The National Chicken Council (NCC) is a nonprofit member organization representing companies that produce and process over 95 percent of the chickens marketed in the United States. NCC promotes the production, marketing and consumption of safe, wholesome, and nutritious chicken products both domestically and internationally. NCC serves as an advocate on behalf of its members with regard to the development and implementation of federal and state programs and regulations that affect the chicken industry.

The National Turkey Federation (NTF) is the national advocate for all segments of the turkey industry. NTF provides services and conducts activities which increase demand for its members' products by protecting and enhancing their ability to profitably provide wholesome, high-quality, and nutritious products.

The United Egg Producers (UEP) is a Capper-Volstead cooperative of egg farmers from all across the United States and representing the ownership of approximately 95% of all the nation's egg-laying hens. UEP members consist of shell egg producers and producers of liquid, dried, and other forms of further processed egg products to the retail, food service and food manufacturing sectors.

The USA Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC) is a trade association of the U.S. poultry and egg industry that is dedicated to increasing exports of U.S. poultry and eggs worldwide. USAPEEC members account for more than 90 percent of all poultry and egg exports. Members include nearly all major U.S. poultry and egg producing and processing companies, as well as many international trading firms. Associate members of USAPEEC include steamship lines, cold storage facilities, freight forwarders, port authorities, and others whose businesses benefit from thriving poultry and egg exports.

The U.S. Poultry & Egg Association (USPOULTRY) is the world's largest poultry organization, whose membership includes producers and processors of broilers, turkeys, ducks, eggs, and breeding stock, as well as allied companies. USPOULTRY has affiliations in 26 states, member companies worldwide, and progressively serves the industry through research, education, communication, and technical services.

These associations represent the production from approximately 30,500 family farmers who raise broiler chickens, 8,000 family farmers who raise turkeys and more than 30,000 family farmers who produce eggs for both domestic and export consumption. The combined membership of these organizations represent an industry worth approximately \$40 billion per year, of which more than \$5.1 billion worth of product was exported in 2011.

The NPIP has historically been, and remains, a crucial program for ensuring the continued viability of U.S. poultry and egg production for both the domestic and export markets. We believe it is important to not only fund the NPIP, but to ensure it receives an appropriate level of support from the USDA. Although the program began in 1935 as a joint federal, state, and industry effort to eradicate *Salmonella pullorum*, it has since expanded to include a variety of programs developed to address other highly pathogenic diseases in poultry (such as Avian Influenza), as well as food safety threats to humans like *Salmonella enteritidis*.

On behalf of our respective members, we strongly support the continued efforts of the NPIP to help establish production and/or health standards for segments of the U.S. poultry industry, including broilers, turkeys, commercial egg layers, primary breeders, and multiplier breeders, as well as hobby and exhibition poultry, waterfowl, and game bird breeders. Every year, the NPIP faces tremendous challenges posed by limited staffing and funding. On a state level, the NPIP operates with significant industry support, but the NPIP office located in Conyers, Georgia requires, and should receive, adequate federal funding to maintain efficiencies and the ability to deal directly with state, federal, and global constituents. As NPIP programs grow in importance, it is imperative that said growth be matched by federal support.

In light of that, and to better assure the continued success of this program so directly vital to the U.S. poultry and egg industries and indirectly beneficial to the U.S. economy, the undersigned associations strongly encourage moving past simply maintaining present levels of funding and support, and attempting to secure increased NPIP resources in both staffing and funding. Thank you, in advance, for your serious consideration of our request. Please

let us know if you have any questions/concerns, or if we may be of assistance, with respect to this letter or the issues addressed within it. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with you further.

Sincerely,



Ashley B. Peterson, Ph.D.
National Chicken Council



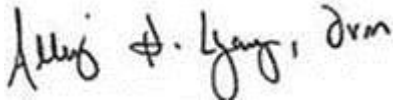
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cc.

Mr. Kevin Shea, Associate Administrator, APHIS

Dr. John Clifford, Deputy Administrator, Veterinary Services, APHIS

Dr. T.J. Myers, Associate Deputy Administrator, Veterinary Services, APHIS

Mr. Edward Avalos, Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, USDA

Ms. Rebecca Blue, Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, USDA