

April 23, 2010

The Honorable Ron Kirk
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

The undersigned organizations wish to reiterate our strong commitment to science-based regulatory systems and ensuring fair and balanced trade between our country and others. It is our understanding a bilateral dialogue is being conducted with the European Commission on the topic of Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT) or cloning of livestock. This timely dialogue can help shape the future direction of trade and technology adoption in Europe, the United States, and globally.

Cloning, quite simply, is the most recent development in assisted reproductive technologies that can be used by farmers and ranchers. Cloning is a proven, reliable method of maintaining high quality livestock to meet our food security and nutritional needs both domestically and globally. Livestock cloning in the U.S. today utilizes superior breeding animals, thus producing better offspring that provide safe, nutritious and high-quality products for the market.

The safety of foods from animals produced by livestock cloning, as well as from their conventionally bred and born offspring, has been extensively studied by authorities around the world, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, European Food Safety Authority, New Zealand Food Safety Authority, and Japanese Food Safety Commission. All have publicly concluded the products of cloned cattle and pigs are as safe as products from conventionally bred animals. Most importantly, these reviews also conclude the offspring of clones are not clones as they are produced through conventional breeding, and their products are equivalent to products from any other offspring. Several additional nations are currently in the process of reviewing the technology.

Our organizations are committed to ensuring American farmers and ranchers have the ability to use proven technology to improve the quality, safety and affordability of the products they produce. We have a long record of publicly supporting their right to use technology proven to be safe and effective and to allow the marketplace to decide their success or failure. Consequently, our industries have worked with the livestock cloning companies in the U.S. to put into place a mechanism to identify the cloned animals which may enter into production should they choose to do so.

Although there is no scientific reason to exclude cloned animals from the food supply, in order to provide our members with the opportunity to utilize cloning if they so choose, our industries are willing to use a supply chain management program to segregate and exclude cloned animals. However, this supply chain management program does not include the offspring of registered

clones and any attempts to expand it to do so would be pointless, unnecessary and untenable. Not only are the offspring of clones not clones, it is neither practical nor possible for meat and dairy producers to identify the offspring of a cloned animal. Progeny of clones must be treated as any other animal entering the food supply in both domestic and international markets.

We understand the European Commission has promised to review the topic of livestock cloning and issue a report within the year. We fully and strongly support the U.S. government effort to ensure no trade barriers are erected. Our experience and insight on cloning and livestock production can be requested as needed as these discussions progress.

The ongoing evolution and application of livestock cloning technology is not limited to interactions between the U.S. and Europe; significant applications are also evolving globally, as is evident in South America and Asia. We urge you to seek a method to include other countries utilizing the technology in the dialogue so global acceptance can be achieved.

Our organizations appreciate the work put forth on behalf of our industries and stand ready to assist you in any way as this dialogue progresses.

Sincerely,

American Meat Institute
Biotechnology Industry Organization
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Meat Association
National Pork Producers Council

cc: Secretary Tom Vilsack, USDA
Commissioner Margaret Hamburg, FDA