



# NEBRASKA WHEAT

July 22, 2008

The Honorable Ben Nelson (D-NE)  
United States Senate  
720 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson,

On behalf of the Nebraska Wheat Board, I write to urge you to co-sponsor the newly introduced "Foot and Mouth Disease Prevention Act of 2008." Sponsored by Senators Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Mike Enzi (R-WY), the bill would prohibit the importation of meat from any region in Argentina until the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) can prove that Argentina is free of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD).

As you know, the state of Nebraska is agriculturally based and primarily relies on raising livestock and the production of different crops as a main source of income. Because of this strong dependence, we feel that this matter should not be overlooked. A Kansas State University study recently estimated that a U.S. outbreak of FMD would cost the state of Kansas alone nearly \$1 billion. Likewise, other agricultural states would be at great risk. Thus, I strongly encourage you to co-sponsor the Johnson-Enzi bill and strengthen conditions for our agriculture workers.

The USDA is considering a proposal that would allow meat imports from Argentina, despite Argentina's well documented FMD infections. Our government must not open U.S. markets to Argentine beef until all health concerns have been eliminated; the Johnson-Enzi Bill will make sure this happens.

In addition, Argentina's unpaid debt adversely affects Nebraska's wheat farmers by creating an unfair playing field between U.S. and international agriculture markets. Argentina's debt default and restructuring allowed the Argentine government to intentionally devalue Argentine peso, creating an export incentive for domestic Argentine exporters. This currency devaluation hurts Nebraska's agriculture community since it puts Nebraskan farmers and ranchers at a disadvantage to sell their agricultural products.

The "Foot and Mouth Disease Prevention Act of 2008" will be strengthened by adding your support. Thank you for your consideration to this important issue. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Royce Schaneman, Executive Director  
Nebraska Wheat Board

CC: The Honorable Chuck Hagel (R-NE)  
The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE)  
The Honorable Lee Terry (R-NE)  
The Honorable Adrian Smith (R-NE)