

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 24, 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairman  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
328 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
Ranking member  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
328 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts:

As your Committee prepares to finalize the 2012 Farm Bill, we urge you to increase support for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. As you well know, agriculture is a growing and vibrant sector of our nation's economy, yet farming and ranching as a career choice may be one of the most difficult occupations to enter. That is why in the 1990 Farm Bill, Congress created programs to help beginning farmers and ranchers.

The 2008 Farm Bill extended these provisions and created new initiatives and incentives for beginning farmers and ranchers. One of the most successful beginning farmer and rancher initiatives in the 2008 Farm Bill, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, provides grants to community organizations and educational institutions to assist and support beginning farmers and ranchers. This is the only federal program exclusively dedicated to training the next generation of farmers and ranchers. Its demonstrated success and growing demand underscores the importance of the program to young and new farmers.

As you finalize the Committee's Farm Bill process, we urge you to maintain, at a minimum, the 2008 level of \$20 million per year over the next five years for this program. Your support will help create jobs, increase opportunities for a new generation of farmers, and enhance the nation's economy and agriculture security.

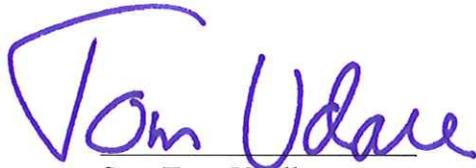
Sincerely,



Sen. Al Franken



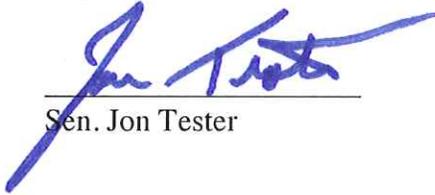
Sen. Bernie Sanders



Sen. Tom Udall



Sen. Jeff Merkley



Sen. Jon Tester