

July 26, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

The undersigned organizations respectfully request you take action to preserve a fair and competitive marketplace for all meat and poultry products, regardless of the method in which these products are produced. Our members raise and process cattle, sheep, hogs, turkeys, and chickens to feed families in the United States and around the world. Protecting the health and welfare of consumers is our top priority and this goal is achieved under a comprehensive regulatory system administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). That system ensures all meat and poultry products are held to the same rigorous food safety and labeling standards. Anything less is a grave disservice to consumers and producers.

At a recent public meeting held by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which excluded USDA and at which FDA indicated it plans to assert itself as the primary regulator of cell-cultured products, a representative of a cell-cultured protein company stated, "Our beef is beef, our chicken is chicken." If that is so, then cell-cultured protein products that purport to be meat or poultry should be subject to the same comprehensive inspection system that governs other amenable meat and poultry products to ensure they are wholesome and safe for consumption, and to ensure they are labeled and marketed in a manner that provides a level playing field in the marketplace.

USDA is uniquely equipped to ensure both elements: inspectors are on-site daily, and USDA approves all product labels to ensure products are what they claim to be and to prevent consumers from being misled. Meat and poultry processing companies have been meeting the challenge of USDA inspection for decades. Cell-cultured meat and poultry companies can and should meet the same requirements.

Ironically, this regulatory power grab by FDA comes on the heels of the White House's recently released government reorganization plan that included moving primary federal food safety functions into a single agency housed within the USDA. Having cell-cultured protein products regulated by FDA is not only inconsistent with the meat and poultry inspection statutes, but also with the White House's reorganization plan.

Undoubtedly, USDA's exacting standards impose regulatory burdens on meat and poultry producers – as they should. However, if cell-cultured protein companies want the privilege of marketing their products as meat and poultry products to the American public, in order to ensure a fair and competitive marketplace, they should be happy to follow the same rules as everyone else. Consumers expect and deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation
American Sheep Industry Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Chicken Council
National Pork Producers Council
National Turkey Federation
North American Meat Institute