

U.S. Sen. Baldwin, bipartisan colleagues: Call for fairness for farmers, request DOJ investigate potential illegal practices by beef packers

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) joined a bipartisan group of her Senate colleagues, led by Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE), in writing a letter to the U.S. Department of Justice requesting that the department investigate potential anticompetitive activities in the highly concentrated beef packing sector.

“Recent pricing discrepancies between fed cattle and boxed beef are pushing cattle producers and feeders to the brink...Cattlemen across America seriously question the ability for their children to take over what are frequently multi-generational family-owned operations that serve as the engines for their communities and our country’s food supply,” the [letter](#) reads. “It is critical for the DOJ to act expediently to investigate these concerning circumstances.”

Full text of the letter is available [here](#). Along with Senators Baldwin and Fischer, the letter was signed by Senators Steve Daines (R-MT), Jim Risch (R-ID), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Mike Enzi (R-WY), Mike Rounds (R-SD), John Hoeven (R-ND), Doug Jones (D-AL), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), John Barrasso (R-WY), Tina Smith (D-MN), Martha McSally (R-AZ), Ben Sasse (R-NE), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), Josh Hawley (R-MO), Joni Ernst (R-IA), and John Thune (R-SD).

In April, Senators Baldwin and Hawley asked the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) [to open an antitrust investigation into the meatpacking industry](#). The industry is

currently dominated by just a handful of large, multinational firms that have concentrated meat processing into fewer and fewer facilities, leaving America's food supply chain vulnerable to disruptions. In their bipartisan letter, the Senators note that the closing of three pork plants because of COVID-19 has resulted "in the shutdown of a staggering 15 percent of America's pork production" at a time when stable supply chains have become more critical than ever. Recent outbreaks at key beef processing plants have exacerbated the challenges dairy and beef farmers face when getting their products to market.