



# SUPPORTING SOUTH DAKOTA'S CATTLE PRODUCERS

*Cattle production is the largest livestock sector in the state, and Senator Thune continues working to make sure cattle producers are adequately supported and have access to a fair and transparent marketplace.*

## Highlights of Senator Thune's Commitment to Cattle Producers

### Cattle Market Oversight

- Sen. Thune has been a leader in ensuring cattle producers have access to a fair and transparent marketplace. Sen. Thune [led](#) his colleagues in a letter urging Attorney General Merrick Garland to continue the U.S. Department of Justice investigation into the nation's four biggest meatpackers. Sen. Thune [made](#) a similar request in 2020.
- Sen. Thune [sent](#) a letter requesting that the Senate Judiciary Committee hold a hearing on possible anti-competitive activity in the cattle markets. Following his request, the Senate Judiciary Committee [held](#) a hearing to examine potential market manipulation and anti-competitive action in the beef industry.
- Sen. Thune also [sent](#) a letter to the Senate Agriculture Committee requesting a hearing to consider the challenges facing the livestock industry. Following his request, the Agriculture Committee [held](#) a hearing to examine the cattle market, including potential manipulation by meatpackers. During the hearing, Sen. Thune heard testimony from stakeholders, including a South Dakota cattle producer, about their experiences with the cattle market. Sen. Thune questioned the South Dakota producer about the steps that could be taken to level the playing field between cattle producers and meatpackers. He also emphasized the importance of encouraging fairness and transparency so both producers and consumers are getting a fair price at market.

### Meat Processing

- Sen. Thune [introduced](#) the bipartisan Strengthening Local Processing Act, which would provide federal support to America's small meat and poultry processors and help strengthen and streamline their operations. The bill would give small food processors more access to information that is critical to food safety planning, allow more inspector-approved meat products to be sold across state lines, and funnel federal dollars toward training, education, and technical assistance grants.

## Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (MCOOL)

- The current beef labeling system allows imported beef that is neither born nor raised in the United States, but simply finished here, to be labeled as a product of the USA. This process is unfair to cattle producers and misleading for consumers. To address this, Sen. Thune [introduced](#) the bipartisan American Beef Labeling Act, which would reinstate MCOOL for beef within one year of enactment. The legislation would direct the U.S. Trade Representative to do so in compliance with the World Trade Organization. If agreement was not reached, MCOOL would be automatically reinstated.

## Brazilian Beef

- Sen. Thune has long been concerned with Brazilian beef imports into the United States. Following USDA's decision to lift the U.S. ban on Brazilian beef imports, Sen. Thune [led](#) a bipartisan letter expressing concern that this decision could put food safety standards at risk. Brazil later failed to quickly disclose two cases of atypical spongiform encephalopathy – a neurological disease of cattle – which could pose a significant threat to the health and safety of the U.S. cattle herd. In response, Sen. Thune again [led](#) a bipartisan letter in support of the cattle industry's requests for the immediate suspension of fresh beef imports from Brazil.

## Livestock Programs

- Sen. Thune is a strong supporter of the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP), both of which provide assistance to producers who are affected by weather events, including drought and snow storms.
- In the 2018 farm bill, Sen. Thune [secured](#) provisions to greatly improve the approval rate of LIP applications for death losses due to weather-related diseases by allowing Farm Service Agency county committees to determine if an eligible adverse weather event directly caused the death of livestock.
- After hearing from South Dakotans about a coverage gap in ELAP during the 2021 drought, Sen. Thune [led](#) a letter requesting that costs incurred by moving livestock to feed during drought conditions also be covered, and he continues working with USDA to address this issue.

## Regulatory Relief

- Sen. Thune [introduced](#) the bipartisan Livestock Regulatory Protection Act, which would amend the Clean Air Act to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from issuing permits related to livestock emissions. This would include any carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, water vapor, or methane emissions from biological processes related to the production of livestock.