

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0305

August 30, 2022

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

The emerging global food crisis demands action from the United States and our global trading partners. Soaring food prices are driving millions into poverty around the world. While much of the global crisis is outside the direct control of the United States since food and fertilizer are traded on a global market, the Biden Administration's war on domestic energy production and other radical environmental policies have contributed to rising prices of these commodities.

According to World Bank data, "92.9% of low-income, 92.7% of lower-middle-income, and 89% of upper-middle-income have seen inflation levels above 5%, with many experiencing double-digit inflation."¹ Consumers in the United States are being hammered by rising food prices. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, "In 2022, food price increases are expected to be above the increases for 2020 and 2021. In 2022, food-at home prices are predicted to increase between 10.0 and 11.0 percent, and food-away-from-home prices are predicted to increase between 6.5 and 7.5 percent."²

While we appreciate that some relief may be on the way, contingent on Ukraine's ability to export grain, we believe that steps must be taken by the United States to increase supply and to ensure that global markets are functioning effectively.

Please provide answers to the following questions by September 16, 2022:

1. What steps are being taken to support domestic grain production?
2. What steps are being taken to increase domestic grain production?
3. What steps are being taken to eliminate incentives for producers not to produce on currently unused or underutilized agriculture land, or to make sure that land retirement programs are focused on marginal land and not on prime cropland?

¹ The World Bank, Food Security Update (August 15, 2022)

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update>

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food Price Outlook 2022 (July 25, 2022)

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-price-outlook/summary-findings/>

4. How many acres are being returned to production following USDA's May 26, 2022 announcement allowing producers to request voluntary termination of their Conservation Reserve Program contracts?
 - a. How many requests have been denied? If any, why?
 - b. How many requests are still awaiting approval?
5. What steps are being taken to increase access to fertilizer for domestic agriculture producers?
6. What steps are being taken to protect domestic agriculture supply chains?
7. Has USDA investigated recent reports of fires at food processing and storage facilities?
 - a. If so, what have these investigations uncovered?


Sincerely,



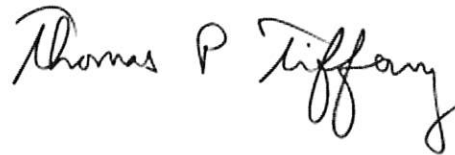
Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress



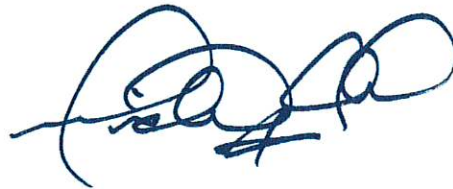
Mary E. Miller
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