March 27, 2010

Dear Mr. Hageman:

Thank you for contacting me expressing your concerns with President Obama's proposed agricultural program budget cuts. I too am concerned about the affect such cuts would have on farmers and ranchers of all sizes.

Earlier this year, President Obama released a 150 page summary of his budget proposal for next year. Included in that proposal was $16 billion worth of agricultural program cuts spread out over the next 10 years. The administration's proposal would prohibit farmers and ranchers with $500,000 in sales from receiving direct payments. Basing payment eligibility rules on gross sales fails to recognize the economic hardships our producers face due to increased input costs. Many times a producer's input costs far exceed their crop sales. Nearly 75 percent of America's agriculture production is generated from farm operations with at least $500,000 in annual sales. Additionally, the proposal would have reduced funding for the federal crop insurance program by over $5 billion, significantly jeopardizing the tremendous gains that have been accomplished by producers to properly manage their risks.

In response to the president's proposal, Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and I sent a letter to the Senate Budget Committee in strong opposition to these cuts. Fifteen other senators joined our efforts and we were successful in keeping these cuts out of S. Con. Res. 13, the Senate's budget resolution.

Rest assured as the Senate continues work on agriculture policy and the upcoming appropriations bills, I will fight vigorously to maintain a strong safety net for producers. Again thank you for taking the time to

contact me. If you would like more information on issues before the Senate, please visit my website at **http://roberts.senate.gov**. You may also sign up on my home page for a monthly electronic newsletter that will provide additional updates on my work for Kansas.

With every best wish,

Sincerely,

Pat Roberts

PR:rf