



Industry News - AM

Congressmen lean on Vilsack to set record straight on LFTB

By [Rita Jane Gabbett](#) on 4/20/2012

Thirty members of Congress signed a letter asking Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to provide them with the steps USDA plans to take to set the record straight about the safety of lean finely textured beef (LFTB).

“We agree with you that consumers should always have the ability to exercise choice in the marketplace. ... However, in the current environment of rampant and intentional mischaracterization and misinformation, it is incumbent on all of us to ensure consumers are able to make choices that are based on facts, rather than emotion and hysteria,” the letter stated.

The legislators pointed to job losses and the possibility of consumers paying more for their ground beef.

“We have been watching with great concern as this campaign of misinformation has unfolded and have been particularly concerned about the loss of jobs that’s resulted from it. No company should be forced to close its doors due to a smear campaign by a few overzealous individuals in the media. LFTB is a safe product and should be promoted as such,” the legislators wrote.

Vilsack appeared with Iowa Gov. Terry Brandstad on March 29 at a [news conference](#) where he called the product safe, healthy and affordable, but defended USDA’s decision to give school lunch programs the option to choose ground beef without LFTB. He said that decision reflected USDA’s dual role of ensuring safe food and to serve customers.