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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

December 14, 2005

Charles Christopherson  
Chief Financial Officer  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Christopherson:

We are writing in regard to your compliance with the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPIA). The Department of Agriculture's recently released 2005 Performance and Accountability Report shows improper payments are not being reported for the following programs: School Lunch and Breakfast Program; Women, Infants, and Children, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Milk Income Loss Contract Program.

As part of our oversight of the effectiveness and efficiency of Federal financial management, our Subcommittee needs to have the best data available so that we know what work on improper payments remains to be done. However, estimates are only the first step. The ultimate goal is to eliminate improper payments in federal agencies and illustrate impeccable stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

In order to work with your agency in achieving full compliance with IPIA, we ask that you provide detailed answers to the following questions for the non-compliant programs mentioned above:

- 1) What obstacles have prevented your agency from providing estimates of improper payments in fiscal years 2002 through 2005?
- 2) When will you have estimates of improper payments available?
- 3) What steps are you taking, even in the absence of estimates, to reduce the risk of improper payments at your agency?

Please provide and return the requested information to

Liz Scranton, Chief Clerk  
Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and  
International Security  
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
439 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Please contact Robin Landauer with Senator Coburn's staff at 202.224.2254 or John  
Kilvington with Senator Carper's staff at 202.224.7061 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Tom Coburn  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Federal Financial  
Management, Government Information,  
and International Security



Tom Carper  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Federal Financial  
Management, Government Information,  
and International Security