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## President's proposed ag cuts are premature

*Musgrave calls for market instability*

Seeking to avoid further instability in agricultural markets, and working to protect Colorado's farmers and ranchers, Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave recently petitioned the Budget Committee to postpone President Bush's proposed cuts to farm programs until Congress renews the farm bill.

In a letter sent by the Congresswoman and the entire House Agriculture Committee, she stressed to Budget Chairman Jim Nussle the importance of keeping budget and funding rules constant this year after some cuts were made last year and the policies of the farm bill expire a year from now.

"Agriculture producers and their lenders need the stability promised in the 2002 farm bill, the rules shouldn't be changed for them in the remaining months of this law," said Musgrave. "Last year, the Agriculture Committee joined the rest of Congress in finding responsible areas to limit spending and help rein-in the sizable federal deficit. Current market

conditions make it unwise to implement further changes this year."

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture forecasted national net farm income for 2006 will be down \$16 billion, to \$56 billion. This would be a 23 percent decline from 2005 and 32 percent from the record level of 2004. In addition, crop receipts are predicted to drop \$5 billion from last year and \$8 billion from 2004. This would be the lowest level of crop receipts since 2002.

The letter stated:

The Committee on Agriculture is dedicated to ensuring that the Federal government continues to promote policies that will keep American agriculture and rural communities strong and our citizens healthy and safe. We believe that our current policies — as authorized and modified by the 2002 farm bill — do precisely that. These policies fit together in a framework that represents carefully crafted tradeoffs among the commodity, conservation, environmental, food and nutrition, trade, rural development, research, and energy programs under our jurisdiction.