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## Cattlemen's Day

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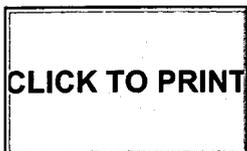
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Welcome to Cattlemen's Day. I wish I could be with you during your annual convention, but the Senate is business has kept me in Washington.

Montana Cattlemen's Association provides an important voice for Montana's agricultural producers. I commend you for staying involved and keeping me informed.

I would like to thank Dave Kelsey for traveling with me to Cuba. As Dave has told you, the trip was successful. For the first time ever, Cuba has signed an agreement to pay cash for Montana cattle, wheat, barley, and dry beans over the next six months.

With Dave's help, we've already finished a deal to send down a shipment of dry beans and now he's talking directly with Alimport, the Cuban buying agency, on the specifics of a shipment of cattle. I'm proud because this deal is the first of its kind. It'll help create jobs and boost our state's agricultural economy.

Studies show, in the absence of an embargo, that the Cuban market could be worth as much as \$1.2 billion to the U.S. economy, including \$76 million in beef exports.

On another note, I applaud you for all of your work on country-of-origin labeling. Like you, I am continuing to fight for a workable implementation of the law.

Country-of-origin labeling is especially important to our cattle producers because it will add value to our domestic commodities. Montanans and Americans produce the highest quality agricultural products in the world, and they should be rewarded for that.

We have a long road in front of us, but I'll continue to fight to make sure we implement country-of-origin labeling in a simple and cost effective manner.

There's a lot of work to be done, but I'm confident that if we work together, we will get it done. I wish you a productive convention and I look forward to hearing your ideas.

Good luck with your meeting. Get some good work done.

And the next time you're in Washington, please stop by my office. My staff and I are here to help with whatever you need.

All the best.