

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

July 15, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

I am writing to you today on behalf of Wisconsin farmers who partner with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). When farmers utilize USDA services to produce the highest quality food and contribute to their rural economies, they must be able to trust their partners in Washington. For that reason, I am alarmed by recent reports that the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has access to USDA databases containing farmers' personal information—an intrusion that not only breaches their privacy, but also raises serious concerns about the future of USDA payments, our nation's food security, and the consolidation of farmland and processing operations.

Wisconsin farmers share sensitive financial information with USDA when seeking federal loans or disaster assistance. Historically, only trained Farm Service Agency staff and senior USDA officials have had access to this data. However, reports indicate that DOGE has been granted sweeping access to the National Payment System that controls tens of billions of dollars in payments and loans to farmers and ranchers across the United States. There is no clear justification for this, and it raises serious concerns about data security, farmers' privacy, and the potential misuse of confidential records.

DOGE has already been granted unprecedented access to sensitive data from other federal databases. While at the National Labor Relations Board, DOGE accessed and possibly exported sensitive and personally identifiable information regarding union members, lawsuits and corporate data. USDA systems and staff are charged with storing similarly sensitive information. Farmers deserve to know that their private information is protected and will not be exported for unauthorized, and potentially illegal, uses. In the wrong hands, sensitive data about our nation's agricultural sector could be taken advantage of to exploit vulnerabilities in our food supply chains. It could also be used to further consolidate agricultural processing capacity and land ownership.

I am also concerned by the reports that DOGE has the ability to approve or block USDA payments and loans. An unappointed and unelected group of Washington insiders with no accountability to farmers should not be in charge of delaying disaster relief checks or blocking contracts. At a time when farmers and rural communities are facing volatile market conditions and increasingly severe weather, the accessibility and security of USDA resources is more important than ever.

I urge you to take immediate steps to restore the public's confidence in the security of USDA's payment systems. I request that you rescind DOGE's access to farmers' private data, as well as their involvement in payment and loan decisions. The agency must ensure that farmers are safeguarded from the unauthorized use of their data and that funds they have been promised are not unjustifiably blocked or delayed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator