



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUN 17 2008

Mr. Thomas A. Hammer
President
National Oilseed Processors Association (NOPA)
1300 I Street, NW., Suite 1020
Washington, D.C. 20005-4168

Dear Mr. Hammer:

Thank you for your letter of May 30, 2008, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding treatment of differential export taxes (DETs) in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Development Agenda. We appreciate the efforts your organizations have put forward in seeking the elimination of DETs in the Doha Round.

U.S. agricultural negotiators have repeatedly raised DETs as an issue in the Doha Round negotiations and have pressed to include language in the draft agriculture modalities text to discipline these measures. We are supported in our efforts by other WTO Members, including Canada, Japan, and the European Union, which share our concerns about the trade-distorting nature of DETs.

Unfortunately, these concerns have not been addressed in Chairman Falconer's draft text. Recent worldwide concerns about high food prices and food availability have highlighted the deleterious effect of export restrictions, including the negative impact of DETs. Despite this improved recognition, reaching an agreement to include specific disciplines for DETs in the draft text remains a serious challenge. Please be assured that we will continue to press, along with other like-minded WTO Members, for the inclusion of disciplines for DETs in the draft text and that we appreciate the support of your organization in this matter.

A similar reply has been sent to each of your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Schafer", written in a cursive style.

Edward T. Schafer
Secretary