

April 29, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As members of the Coalition to Promote U.S. Agricultural Exports, we are writing to express our strong concern about your FY 10 budget outline that proposes a reduction in funding for the Market Access Program (MAP). The budget outline proposes to cut MAP funding by 20 percent from its 2008 Farm Bill authorized level of \$200 million annually to \$160 million. We believe such a reduction in funding or other suggested changes to the eligibility criteria of MAP will negatively impact the ability of U.S. agriculture to promote American products in international markets, thereby weakening our exports and undermining your Administration's larger efforts to stabilize the economy and preserve American jobs. We further believe that your call for a 62 percent increase in funding for MAP while a U.S. Senator, as indicated in your July 30, 2007 letter to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee (see attached), is indicative of your underlying support for such cost-effective, public-private export promotion programs.

MAP, which is administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), forms a highly successful partnership between non-profit U.S. agricultural trade associations, farmer cooperatives, non-profit state-regional trade groups, small businesses and USDA to share the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities such as consumer promotions, market research, trade shows, and trade servicing. Exports are a vital part of the U.S. economic engine, and agricultural exports continue to be its strongest component. Since its creation in 1985, MAP has proven to be highly successful in helping to boost U.S. agricultural exports, protecting and creating American jobs, and increasing farm income. Over this period, U.S. agricultural exports have increased by nearly 300 percent, and today over 1.2 million Americans have jobs that depend on these exports. A study commissioned by USDA prior to the 2008 Farm Bill debate showed that farm net cash income increased considerably as a result of spending on market development activities. We believe it makes little sense to reverse that trend, especially during an unprecedented economic downturn.

American agriculture and American workers also continue to face increasingly strong foreign competition supported by government sponsored activities. In recent years, the EU, the Cairns group, and other foreign competitors have devoted considerable resources to various market development activities to promote their exports of agricultural, forestry, and fishery products. A significant portion of these activities is carried out in the United States. Because market promotion programs are permitted under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, with no limit on public or producer funding, such programs are increasingly seen as a centerpiece of a winning strategy in the international trade battleground. Many competitor countries have announced ambitious trade goals and are shaping export programs to target promising growth markets and bring new companies into the export arena.

MAP, it should be emphasized, is a cost-share program under which farmers and other participants are required to contribute as much as a 50 percent match of their own resources to be eligible. It has been and continues to be an excellent example of an effective public-private partnership. While government is an important partner in this effort, industry funds supporting both generic and branded promotion are now estimated to represent almost 60 percent of total annual spending on market development and promotion, up from roughly 45 percent in 1996 and less than 30 percent in 1991. Clearly, U.S. producers and industry are committed to the program.

By any measure, MAP has been tremendously successful and extremely cost-effective in helping maintain and expand U.S. agricultural exports, protect and create American jobs, strengthen farm income and help, at least in part, to offset the government-supported advantages afforded foreign competitors. MAP is one of the few tools U.S. agriculture has to compete in the international marketplace, and is even more important today as our competitors increase their financial resources to gain market share.

It is disappointing that a cut in MAP is being recommended at a time when U.S. agricultural exports are softening, farm incomes are falling, and the overall U.S. economy is in a deep recession. Therefore, we strongly urge you to reconsider your proposal to reduce funding for this important agricultural export program and ask that you support the full 2008 Farm Bill authorized funding level of \$200 million for MAP as part of your Administration's FY 10 budget.

We appreciate this opportunity to express our views and look forward to working with you and your Administration to achieve the goals of expanding U.S. agricultural exports, increasing farm income, and protecting and creating American jobs.

Sincerely,

Coalition to Promote U.S. Agricultural Exports (See attached.)

cc: Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Honorable Peter Orszag  
Honorable Ron Kirk  
Honorable Kathleen Merrigan  
Honorable James Miller  
Honorable Bud Philbrook  
Honorable Michael Michener  
Max T. Holtzman, Special Advisor to the Secretary

**ORGANIZATIONS SIGNING COALITION TO PROMOTE U.S.  
AGRICULTURAL EXPORT'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA  
APRIL 29, 2009**

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute	Gulf Citrus Growers Association
American Cotton Shippers Association	Highlands County Citrus Growers Association, Inc.
American Farm Bureau Federation	Hop Growers of America, Inc.
American Feed Industry Association	Indian River Citrus League
American Forest and Paper Association	Kentucky Distillers' Association
American Hardwood Export Council	Land O'Lakes, Inc.
American Meat Institute	Mohair Council of America
American Peanut Council	National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
American Quarter Horse Association	National Association of Wheat Growers
American Seed Trade Association	National Barley Growers Association
American Sheep Industry Association	National Cattlemen's Beef Association
American Soybean Association	National Chicken Council
Atlantic Seaboard Wine Association	National Confectioners Association
Blue Diamond Growers	National Corn Growers Association
Calcot, Ltd.	National Cotton Council
California Agricultural Export Council	National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
California Apple Commission	National Grange
California Asparagus Commission	National Grape Cooperative Association, Inc.
California Association of Winegrape Growers	National Milk Producers Federation
California Canning Peach Association	National Oilseed Processors Association
California Cherry Advisory Board	National Pork Producers Council
California Cling Peach Board	National Potato Council
California Dried Plum Board	National Renderers Association
California Farm Bureau Federation	National Sorghum Producers
California Fig Advisory Board	National Sunflower Association
California Grape and Tree Fruit League	North American Millers' Association
California Kiwifruit Commission	Northwest Cherry Growers
California Pear Advisory Board	Northwest Horticultural Council
California Pear Growers	Northwest Wine Coalition
California Pistachio Export Council	Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.
California Stone Fruit Coalition	Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Association
California Strawberry Commission	Pet Food Institute
California Table Grape Commission	Produce Marketing Association
California Tomato Farmers	Shelf-Stable Food Processors Association
California Walnut Commission	Softwood Export Council
Cherry Marketing Institute	Southern Forest Products Association
CoBank	Southern U.S. Trade Association
Dairy Farmers of America	Sunkist Growers
Diamond Foods	Sun Maid Growers of California
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States	Sunsweet Growers, Inc.
Florida Citrus Commission	Texas Cattle Feeders Association
Florida Citrus Packers Association	The Catfish Institute
Florida Citrus Processors Association	The Popcorn Institute
Florida Department of Citrus	Tree Top, Inc.
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association	United Egg Association
Florida Peanut Producers Association	United Egg Producers
Food Export Association of the Midwest USA	United Fresh Produce Association
Food Export USA - Northeast	USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
Georgia Poultry Federation	USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
Ginseng Board of Wisconsin	

USA Rice Federation  
U.S. Apple Association  
U.S. Apple Export Council  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
U.S. Dry Bean Council  
U.S. Grains Council  
U.S. Hides, Skins & Leather Association  
U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc.  
U.S. Meat Export Federation  
U.S. Rice Producers Association  
U.S. Wheat Associates, Inc.  
Utah Department of Agriculture

Valley Fig Growers  
Washington Apple Commission  
Washington State Fruit Commission  
Welch Foods Inc., A Cooperative  
Western Growers Association  
Western Pistachio Association  
Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association  
WineAmerica (The National Association of American Wineries)  
Winegrape Growers of America  
Wine Institute