

June 8, 2009

Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Jack Kingston, Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Chairman and Ranking Minority Member Kingston:

As members of the Coalition to Promote U.S. Agricultural Exports, we are writing to urge your strong support for maintaining vital funding for USDA's important export programs, including the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program, when the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies considers the FY 10 Agriculture Appropriations bill. We strongly urge that MAP be funded at no less than \$200 million for FY 10, as authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. In addition, we believe that FMD should be funded at its full authorized level of \$34.5 million, as provided in the Farm Bill. These are the same levels of funding included in the FY 09 omnibus appropriations bill. We also request that you strongly oppose any efforts that would either eliminate or reduce funding for these important 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 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.

We appreciate this opportunity to express our views and look forward to working with you 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: Members, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

**ORGANIZATIONS SIGNING COALITION TO PROMOTE U.S.
AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS LETTER TO HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION,
AND RELATED AGENCIES
JUNE 8, 2009**

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute	Kentucky Distillers' Association
American Cotton Exporters Association	Land O'Lakes, Inc.
American Cotton Shippers Association	Mohair Council of America
American Feed Industry Association	National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
American Forest and Paper Association	National Association of Wheat Growers
American Meat Institute	National Barley Growers Association
American Peanut Council	National Cattlemen's Beef Association
American Quarter Horse Association	National Chicken Council
American Seed Trade Association	National Corn Growers Association
American Sheep Industry Association	National Cotton Council
American Soybean Association	National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
Atlantic Cotton Association	National Farmers Union
Atlantic Seaboard Wine Association	National Grange
Blue Diamond Growers	National Grape Cooperative Association, Inc.
Calcot, Ltd.	National Oilseed Processors Association
California Agricultural Export Council	National Pork Producers Council
California Asparagus Commission	National Potato Council
California Association of Winegrape Growers	National Renderers Association
California Canning Peach Association	National Sorghum Producers
California Dried Plum Board	National Sunflower Association
California Farm Bureau Federation	National Turkey Federation
California Fig Advisory Board	North American Millers' Association
California Grape and Tree Fruit League	Northwest Horticultural Council
California Kiwifruit Commission	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 Cotton 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	Texas Cotton Association
Florida Department of Citrus	The Catfish Institute
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association	The Popcorn Institute
Florida Peanut Producers Association	Tree Top, Inc.
Food Export Association of the Midwest USA	United Egg Association
Food Export USA - Northeast	United Egg Producers
Georgia Poultry Federation	United Fresh Produce Association
Ginseng Board of Wisconsin	USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
Gulf Citrus Growers Association	USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
Hop Growers of America, Inc.	USA Rice Federation
Indian River Citrus League	U.S. Apple Association
Kansas Livestock Association	

U.S. Apple Export Council
U.S. Dairy Export Council
U.S. Dry Bean 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.
Valley Fig Growers
Washington Apple Commission

Washington State Fruit Commission
Welch Foods Inc., A Cooperative
Western Cotton Association
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