

April 15, 2024

The Honorable Katherine Tai  
Ambassador  
U.S. Trade Representative  
600 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Ambassador Tai,

On behalf of the U.S. food and agriculture community, we urge your enhanced engagement on trade policies to bolster our global competitive standing around the world. Recommitting to an aggressive trade agenda, holding parties accountable to commitments, and improving trade enforcement mechanisms are critical steps that need to be taken.

U.S. agriculture is foundational to the American economy – reaching far beyond farms and rural communities to support more than 48 million jobs across the country. The U.S. food and agriculture industries contributed \$2.8 trillion (about \$8,600 per person in the U.S.) in total wages this past year and generated over \$9.6 trillion (about \$30,000 per person in the U.S.) in total economic output.<sup>1</sup> Exports account for about 20 percent of the production in this sector, making international trade vital to the success of U.S. agriculture. In 2023, American food and agriculture exports totaled \$175 billion, providing jobs and economic opportunity throughout the supply chain.

We request the Administration recommit to an aggressive trade agenda to meaningfully expand export opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products. Export markets are essential for our survival, and comprehensive trade agreements and elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers help ensure that U.S. agriculture can compete on an even playing field in our export markets.

For trade agreements to function properly, both sides need to abide by their commitments, including the U.S, and it is imperative we respect our commitments under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other trade agreements. Experience has demonstrated that U.S. trade actions that conflict with its trade agreement commitments often result in retaliation against U.S. food and agricultural exports and encourage imitation by trading partners. Such trade disputes and the associated retaliatory tariffs have caused significant long-term economic harm and market disruption for U.S. agricultural producers.

We also call for active enforcement of trade rules to ensure U.S. farmers capture the full scope of market access benefits within our existing trade agreements. Given the political sensitivity of agriculture in so many countries, U.S. agricultural products often face import restrictions and trade-related market distortions that are not in compliance with existing trade agreements. Some governments impose arbitrary protectionist measures to benefit domestic producers, while other governments use non-science based sanitary and phytosanitary measures to create unjustifiable barriers for imports. Active enforcement of trade agreements is critically important for U.S. agricultural producers and exporters.

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<sup>1</sup> 2024 Feeding the Economy report

It is critical the U.S. press international trading partners to implement objective science and risk-based regulatory measures, and that those obligations are upheld when threatened. Adherence to the standards and guidelines of the international standards organizations – namely Codex Alimentarius Commission, International Plant Protection Convention, and World Organization for Animal Health – must be promoted and pursued.

Furthermore, we call on USTR and the Administration to stringently and effectively enforce existing trade agreements. The success of U.S. agriculture depends on a rules-based system of trade, including enforcement mechanisms designed to protect U.S. agriculture from trade distorting impacts by trading partners' non-compliance. To that end, the U.S. should also complete negotiations for WTO dispute settlement system reform in 2024, as it has already committed.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you in support of America's producers and exporters of agricultural products.

Almond Alliance	National Grain and Feed Association
American Farm Bureau Federation	National Milk Producers Federation
American Feed Industry Association	National Oilseed Processors Association
AmericanHort	National Pork Producers Council
American Soybean Association	National Potato Council
Biotechnology Innovation Organization	National Sorghum Producers
Corn Refiners Association	National Turkey Federation
CropLife America	North American Millers' Association
Meat Institute	Northwest Horticultural Council
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture	U.S. Apple Association
National Association of Wheat Growers	U.S. Dairy Export Council
National Cattlemen's Beef Association	U.S. Pea & Lentil Trade Association
National Corn Growers Association	U.S. Peanut Federation
National Cotton Council	USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives	USA Rice Federation
National Fisheries Institute	US Dry Bean Council
	Western Growers Association