

January 12, 2017

Mr. Donald J. Trump  
Office of the Presidential Transition  
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20006

Governor Michael Pence  
Office of the Presidential Transition  
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President-elect Trump,

Congratulations on your successful campaign.

On behalf of the undersigned U.S. agriculture, trade, commerce-related businesses, and associations, we urge you to continue to show your support for American agriculture by advancing the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba and building on the progress that has already been made.

Net farm income is down 46 percent from just three years ago, constituting the largest three-year drop since the start of the Great Depression. This strain on the farm economy is felt across all sectors of the industry and the thousands of small communities that make up rural America. The importance of trade to America's farmers and ranchers cannot be overstated. The share of U.S. agricultural production exported overseas is 20 percent by volume, with some sectors being much higher. For example, exports account for over 70 percent of U.S. production of tree nuts and cotton, over 60 percent of soybeans, and over 50 percent of rice and wheat. Positive farm income throughout America would not be possible without increasing access to foreign markets, like Cuba.

Mr. President-elect, as an international business icon, you understand how difficult it is to be competitive without the ability to extend credit to your customers. We need the Administration's support for legislation that would remove these arbitrary and archaic restrictions on extending credit for the purchase of agricultural commodities and equipment.

Your support in removing outdated financing and trade barriers for exporting agricultural products and equipment to our island neighbor could significantly strengthen a U.S. industry which supports 17 million jobs across the country, and can provide the Cuban people with high-quality American-grown food. Cuba imports nearly 80 percent of its food to feed a population of 11 million people and upwards of three million tourists annually. Cuba's \$2 billion agriculture import market could provide tremendous benefits for farmers across the country and help American agribusiness offset recent losses.

In addition to the size of the Cuban market, its proximity to U.S. ports allows for considerably lower shipping costs and shorter delivery times than our foreign competitors. The logistical advantages alone should make Cuba a common-sense partner for two-way commerce. Instead, the federal government overreach has put American farmers at a global disadvantage. U.S. agriculture continues to lose out to our foreign competitors and our net sales have been steadily declining since 2009.

As result of trade restrictions, the U.S. has fallen from its position as the number one supplier of agricultural products from 2003 to 2012, to now the number five supplier after the European Union, Brazil, Argentina, and Vietnam. The U.S. needs to be number one again. Especially given many of Cuba's imports, including rice, poultry, dairy, soy, wheat, and corn make up more than 70 percent of what they import and they're all grown right here in the U.S. by hardworking American farmers.

As a broad cross-section of rural America, we urge you not to take steps to reverse progress made in normalizing relations with Cuba, and also solicit your support for the agricultural business sector to expand trade with Cuba to help American farmers and our associated industries. It's time to put the 17 million American jobs associated with agriculture ahead of a few hardline politicians in Washington.

We look forward to working closely with you and your team, and please let us know if we can provide any assistance moving forward.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Pulse Association  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Soybean Association  
Corn Refiners Association  
Independent Professional Seed Association  
Livestock Exporters Association of the USA  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Farmers Union  
National Foreign Trade Council  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Potato Council  
National Turkey Federation  
Navajo Agricultural Products Industry  
North American Millers Association  
Rural & Agriculture Council of America  
U.S. Cattlemen's Association  
U.S. Cava Exports  
U.S. Dry Bean Council  
U.S. Wheat Associates  
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council  
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council  
USA Rice

**Agribusiness Organizations**

AGCO  
Amerex Corporation  
Bibler Brothers Lumber and Construction  
Campbell Farms  
Carnes Farms, Inc.

Clark AG Company  
Claxton Poultry  
ETW Enterprises, Inc. Shavings & Rice Hulls  
Falcon Rice Mill  
Farmers Rice Milling Co.  
Gulf Wise Commerce  
Hormel Foods Corporation  
Kennedy Rice Mill, LLC/Planters Rice Mill,  
LLC  
Koenig Vineyards  
Louisiana Rice Milling Company  
Mannco Fertilizer  
Martin Rice Company  
Newcomb Farms  
Poinsett Rice & Grain  
Producers Rice Mill  
Riceland Foods  
RiceTec, Inc  
Riviana Foods – American Rice, Inc  
Sandy Ridge Cotton Company  
Simmons Foods  
Sturman's Smokeshop  
Texas Rice Belt Warehouse, Inc  
TRC Trading Corporation

**State Organizations**

Alabama Farmers Federation  
Alabama Poultry Association  
Agricultural Council of Arkansas  
Arkansas Farm Bureau  
Arkansas Rice Council  
Arkansas Rice Federation  
California Rice Commission  
Central Louisiana Rice Growers Association  
Colorado Farm Bureau  
Colorado Pork Producers Council  
Georgia Farm Bureau  
Idaho Grain Producers Association  
Idaho Potato Commission  
Illinois Farm Bureau  
Illinois Soybean Association  
Illinois Soybean Growers  
Iowa Corn Growers Association  
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation

Iowa Institute for Cooperatives  
Iowa Soybean Association  
Kansas Association of Wheat Growers  
Kansas Corn Growers Association  
Kansas Farm Bureau  
Kansas Livestock Association  
Kansas Soybean Association  
Kansas Wheat Commission  
Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation  
Louisiana Rice Growers Association  
Louisiana Rice Producer's Group  
Michigan Agri-Business Association  
Michigan Bean Shippers  
Michigan Soybean Association  
Minnesota Barley Council  
Minnesota Farm Bureau  
Minnesota Farmers Union  
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association  
Minnesota Turkey Growers  
Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation  
Mississippi Rice Council  
Mississippi Poultry Association  
Missouri Farm Bureau  
New Mexico Cattle Growers Association  
New Mexico Wine and Grape Growers  
Association  
Northeast Louisiana Rice Growers Association  
Ohio Agribusiness Association  
Ohio Corn & Soy  
Texas Farm Bureau  
Texas Grain Sorghum Producers  
Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group

January 13, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the undersigned U.S. agriculture, trade, and commerce-related businesses, and associations we urge you to show your support for American agriculture by advancing the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba.

As you are well aware, U.S. agricultural and food products can be exported to Cuba for humanitarian reasons under the Trade Sanctions Reform Act of 2000 (TSRA). While TSRA opened the channel for shipping agricultural commodities and food products to Cuba, restrictions on financing those sales have made it difficult to compete with our foreign competitors in the Cuban market.

Since the normalization process between the U.S. and Cuba began in December 2014, successive rounds of amendments to Cuba-related regulations have been made through the Departments of Treasury and Commerce. Those changes have allowed for different industries to explore business opportunities in Cuba and for the authorized export and financing of those exports in particular sectors, such as telecommunications, civil aviation, and entertainment. However, agriculture is at a unique disadvantage owing to the codified restrictions of TSRA that prevent similar regulatory authorizations from being extended: as of January 2016, there is a general policy of approval for exports and re-exports of some agricultural items, **but not those defined as agricultural commodities and equipment.**

This Congressional roadblock puts U.S. agriculture at a serious, global disadvantage as we watch foreign competitors continue to take away our market share because of their ability to offer generous credit terms. As recently as 2008, we were selling nearly \$700 million in agriculture products to Cuba annually. In 2015, our sales were under \$200 million in what is nearly a \$2 billion market—U.S. market share is now less than 10 percent of Cuba's agricultural imports, despite the superior quality and competitive prices of our products and the logistical advantages we have. Located just 90 miles from the U.S. coast, Cuba should be an obvious and reliable market for American businesses, as it has been in the past.

Net farm income and U.S. commodity prices are continuing to sharply decline. Depriving U.S. farmers and agribusinesses of the tools they need to be successful, such as private financing, is not only harmful for their bottom lines, but for state and local economies.

We ask you to recognize the economic value Cuba could provide as an agricultural trading partner and take action to usher in a new era for U.S. agricultural exports. **Therefore, we urge you to support H.R. 525, The Cuba Agricultural Exports Act, which would remove restrictions on export financing for agricultural products, allowing U.S. businesses to provide payment or financing terms for sales of agricultural commodities to Cuba. In addition, please reject any course of action that would reverse the critical progress we've made toward a more productive relationship with Cuba.**

We appreciate your continued support of legislation that would improve American agricultural trade opportunities that are vital to our industry.

Sincerely,

cc: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

#### **National Organizations**

American Farm Bureau Federation	National Foreign Trade Council
American Feed Industry Association	National Grain and Feed Association
American Pulse Association	National Milk Producers Federation
American Seed Trade Association	National Oilseed Processors Association
American Soybean Association	National Potato Council
Corn Refiners Association	National Turkey Federation
Independent Professional Seed Association	Navajo Agricultural Products Industry
Livestock Exporters Association of the USA	North American Millers Association
National Association of Egg Farmers	Rural & Agriculture Council of America
National Association of Wheat Growers	U.S. Cattlemen's Association
National Barley Growers Association	U.S. Cava Exports
National Black Growers Council	U.S. Dry Bean Council
National Corn Growers Association	U.S. Rice Producers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives	USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
National Farmers Union	USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
	USA Rice

## **State Organizations**

Alabama Farmers Federation	Kansas Wheat Commission
Alabama Poultry Association	Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation
Agricultural Council of Arkansas	Louisiana Rice Growers Association
Arkansas Farm Bureau	Louisiana Rice Producer's Group
Arkansas Rice Council	Michigan Agri-Business Association
Arkansas Rice Federation	Michigan Bean Shippers
California Rice Commission	Michigan Soybean Association
Central Louisiana Rice Growers Association	Minnesota Barley Council
Colorado Farm Bureau	Minnesota Farm Bureau
Colorado Pork Producers Council	Minnesota Farmers Union
Georgia Farm Bureau	Minnesota Grain and Feed Association
Idaho Grain Producers Association	Minnesota Turkey Growers
Idaho Potato Commission	Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation
Illinois Farm Bureau	Mississippi Poultry Association
Illinois Soybean Growers	Mississippi Rice Council
Iowa Corn Growers Association	Missouri Farm Bureau
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation	Missouri Rice Council
Iowa Institute for Cooperatives	New Mexico Cattle Growers Association
Iowa Soybean Association	New Mexico Wine and Grape Growers Association
Kansas Association of Wheat Growers	Northeast Louisiana Rice Growers Association
Kansas Corn Growers Association	Ohio Agribusiness Association
Kansas Farm Bureau	Ohio Corn & Soy
Kansas Livestock Association	Texas Farm Bureau
Kansas Soybean Association	Texas Grain Sorghum Producers
	Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group

## **Agribusinesses**

AGCO	Kennedy Rice Mill, LLC/Planters Rice Mill, LLC
Amerex Corporation	Koenig Vineyards
Bibler Brothers Lumber and Construction	Louisiana Rice Milling Company
Campbell Farms	Mannco Fertilizer
Cargill, Incorporated	Martin Rice Company
Carnes Farms, Inc.	Newcomb Farms
Clark AG Company	Poinsett Rice & Grain
Claxton Poultry	Producers Rice Mill
CoBank	Riceland Foods
Falcon Rice Mill	RiceTec, Inc.
Farmers Rice Milling Company	Riviana Foods – American Rice, Inc.
Gary Murphy Farms	Simmons Foods
Gulf Wise Commerce	Texas Rice Belt Warehouse, Inc.
Hormel Foods Corporation	TRC Trading Corporation