

May 19, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW,
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

The undersigned U.S. agricultural organizations urge the U.S. Department of State to promptly release the funds that have been committed to support the International Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), in order to maintain strength and continuity of efforts and programs conducted by IICA to advance U.S. interests.

The U.S. Department of State provides funding to numerous international organizations in support of global development and economic growth. Under your leadership, together with that of Secretary Perdue and Ambassador Lighthizer, the United States has executed numerous initiatives to support and grow exports of U.S. agricultural commodities and food products. We greatly appreciate efforts of the State Department, the U.S. Trade Representative's Office and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to expand opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers and food producers around the world, and the Administration's tireless efforts to reduce non-tariff barriers and global policies that hamper or threaten market access for U.S. products.

IICA exemplifies an organization that supports the goal of reducing non-scientific barriers that harm U.S. agricultural exports. IICA's core mission and activities promote adoption of science-based policies, enhance capacity for participation in international organizations, and create a favorable environment for agriculture leaders in the Western Hemisphere to collaborate on common priorities. This is a testament to the value IICA provides to the Department of State, the Department of Agriculture and the undersigned U.S. stakeholders. At a time of increased pressure on U.S. farmers, ranchers and food producers, we write to thank you for your ongoing support of IICA and to encourage continued U.S. engagement and leadership within the organization.

Increasingly, U.S. competitors seek to use trade agreements and international standards to advance national or regional interests and erect *de facto* prohibitions on importation of U.S. products. To combat these efforts, the United States has rightly prioritized proactive engagement in international organizations including the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). Success in these organizations is predicated on U.S. leadership, coalition building, and robust participation of likeminded countries that demand science-based policymaking.

IICA plays a critical role ensuring these conditions exist. Continued U.S. investment in IICA will help the U.S. to expand its track-record of success. IICA has developed several sophisticated programs that support national participation to advance science-based policies in the Codex, OIE and IPPC processes. These programs, coupled with IICA's ongoing leadership of SPS-focused projects and capacity building, augment the U.S.'s own efforts to build coalitions and deliver key outcomes.

In addition to promoting science-based policies consistent with its core mission, IICA is prioritizing use of public-private partnerships to solve some of the most pressing problems facing agriculture today. Empowering the private sector, while ensuring transparency and accountability, will help IICA bring cutting-edge solutions to the hemisphere in a manner that capitalizes on the strengths of private enterprise and avoids bureaucratic red tape that so often plagues innovation. In this way, IICA remains a model for other international organizations and reflects the value the U.S. places on public-private partnerships.

Furthermore, the relationship between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and IICA is strong. USDA continues to leverage IICA to resolve current and future agriculture trade barriers. USDA works with IICA to coordinate and bolster support for science-based standards that facilitate U.S. exports, and provide a forum to share best practices that streamline trade.

IICA has worked with the U.S. to establish control zones for foot and mouth disease (FMD) in Central and South America. In Panama, USDA supported the U.S.-Panama Cooperative Program for the Prevention of FMD, which maintains the Darien Gap area of Panama free from FMD and other foreign animal diseases. This program conducts field surveillance at high-risk border points and annual training, analyzes technical data, and improves the infrastructure.

USDA and IICA developed the OIE Strategy Meeting of the Americas, bringing OIE delegates from the western hemisphere together for the last three years to discuss areas of interest and concerns, prior to the General Session of the World Assembly of OIE Delegates every May. This engagement enables the Americas to present joint regional interventions for the development of international animal health standards.

During IICA's 2019 minister-level meeting, the United States sponsored a resolution emphasizing the need for science-based agricultural regulations to facilitate agricultural trade. The resolution emphasized the importance of applying such principles to maximum-residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides that often present unnecessary barriers to agricultural trade. IICA's outreach was integral to achieving unanimous endorsement of the resolution among IICA's 34 member nations.

In the face of the current COVID-19 crisis, USDA and IICA continue to coordinate and work with agriculture ministers from around the world to find solutions to ensure nutritious food continues to be available for all people.

Recognizing the U.S. Administration's interest in ensuring that funding is directed to international organizations that fulfill their core missions; prioritize accountability, transparency, and stakeholder participation; and advance science-based policies/recommendations, we unequivocally support IICA. We are confident in Director General Manuel Otero's leadership and commitment to driving innovation in agriculture in a manner that enhances global food safety and quality, prioritizes sustainability, and expands rural development. all while supporting growth of international agricultural trade.

Thank you again for your continued efforts to grow U.S. exports on behalf of U.S. farmers, ranchers and food producers.

Respectfully,

American Farm Bureau Federation

American Seed Trade Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Soybean Association
Animal Health Institute
Corn Refiners Association
CropLife America
Food and Agriculture Export Alliance
Global Cold Chain Alliance
International Dairy Foods Association
Leather and Hide Council of America
Meat Import Council of America
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Turkey Federation
North American Export Grain Association
North American Meat Institute
North American Millers' Association
North American Renderers Association
Sweetener Users Association
U.S. Dairy Export Council
U.S. Dry Bean Council
U.S. Grains Council
U.S. Soybean Export Council
United States Council for International Business
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
USA Rice

CC:

Secretary Sonny Perdue
Ambassador Robert Lighthizer
Ted McKinney, Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Department of
Agriculture