

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Your support in removing outdated financing and trade barriers for exporting agricultural products and equipment to our island neighbor could significantly strengthen a U.S. industry which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