

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 Farmers Union
American Feed Industry Association	National Foreign Trade Council
American Pulse Association	National Grain and Feed Association
American Seed Trade Association	National Milk Producers Federation
American Soybean Association	National Oilseed Processors Association
Association of Equipment Manufacturers	National Potato Council
Corn Refiners Association	National Turkey Federation
Independent Professional Seed Association	Navajo Agricultural Products Industry
International Dairy Foods Association	North American Millers Association
Livestock Exporters Association of the USA	Rural & Agriculture Council of America
National Association of Egg Farmers	U.S. Cattlemen's Association
National Association of Wheat Growers	U.S. Cava Exports
National Barley Growers Association	U.S. Dry Bean Council
National Black Growers Council	U.S. Rice Producers Association
National Corn Growers Association	USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives	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 Corn Growers Association	Mississippi Poultry Association
Illinois Farm Bureau	Mississippi Rice Council
Illinois Soybean Growers	Missouri Farm Bureau
Iowa Corn Growers Association	Missouri Rice Council
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation	New Mexico Cattle Growers Association
Iowa Institute for Cooperatives	New Mexico Wine and Grape Growers Association
Iowa Soybean Association	Northeast Louisiana Rice Growers Association
Kansas Association of Wheat Growers	Ohio Agribusiness Association
Kansas Corn Growers Association	Ohio Corn & Soy
Kansas Farm Bureau	Ohio Farm Bureau
Kansas Livestock Association	Texas Farm Bureau
Kansas Soybean Association	Texas Grain Sorghum Producers
	Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group

Agribusinesses

AGCO	Hormel Foods Corporation
Amerex Corporation	Kennedy Rice Mill, LLC/Planters Rice Mill, LLC
Bibler Brothers Lumber and Construction	Koenig Vineyards
Bunge	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.
	TRC Trading Corporation