



September 10, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As directors, secretaries and commissioners of state departments of agriculture, we are writing to strongly urge you to resolve the NAFTA Mexican trucking dispute without further delay. The Government of Mexico's decision to increase tariffs on 36 agricultural products has been extremely harmful to our farmers who are already enduring difficult times due to lower international demand for their products. Simply put, our producers cannot afford to be priced out of the Mexican market given the current global economic crisis. Furthermore, any loss of market share today will result in fewer sales to Mexico in the years to come.

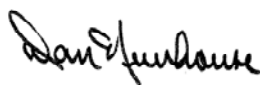
You are aware that on March 19, Mexico imposed retaliatory duties ranging from 10 to 45 percent on U.S. products in response to the vote in Congress to terminate the funding of a pilot cross-border trucking program in the 2009 Omnibus Appropriation Act. Although regrettable and extremely damaging to our agricultural exporters, Mexico's action was in keeping with a 2001 NAFTA dispute resolution determination that the United States had failed to live up to its commitments under the trade agreement.

Mexico is our nation's second largest agricultural trading partner, with one-seventh of all U.S. agricultural exports destined for that critical market. These retaliatory tariffs cover U.S. exports valued at over \$1 billion in 2008, including major products such as fruit juice, soup, pet foods, grapes, pears, potato products, Christmas trees, almonds, onions and canola. We noted an immediate decline in exports when the tariffs were imposed. As our farmers harvest and market the impacted crops, we expect the tariffs will have a detrimental impact on the market prices of these commodities.

Moreover, we are receiving reports that our competitors have been expanding their market share at the expense of our growers and food processors. This trend could have significant long-term impact. Once the Mexican trucking issue is resolved and the retaliatory tariffs are removed, there is little hope that U.S. agricultural producers will quickly recoup their lost market share.

The quick restoration of duty-free exports to the Mexican market is extremely important. Our farmers and food processors are already facing tighter lending practices, higher input costs and lower commodity prices during these difficult economic times. As you are well aware, agricultural exports contribute substantially to the economy of the nation. Certainly, economic development of our rural communities depends on the profitable marketing of our crops. It is vital that your Administration quickly address any outstanding issues related to the trucking pilot program so that our producers can regain unfettered access to the Mexican market. We greatly appreciate your efforts to resolve this issue that is so critical to our growers and our economy.

Sincerely,



Dan Newhouse
Director, Washington
Department of Agriculture



Katy Coba
Director, Oregon
Department of Agriculture



A.G. Kawamura
Secretary, California
Department of Food and Agriculture



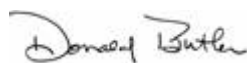
Celia Gould
Director, Idaho State
Department of Agriculture



J. Miley Gonzales
Director/Secretary, New Mexico
Department of Agriculture




John R. Stulp
Commissioner, Colorado
Department of Agriculture



Don Butler
Director, Arizona
Department of Agriculture



Jason Fearneybough
Director, Wyoming
Department of Agriculture



Anthony J. Lesperance,
Director, Nevada
Department of Agriculture

Cc: Transportation Secretary LaHood
USDA Secretary Vilsack
Commerce Secretary Locke
Members of Congress