

April 8, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Farr  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Moran and Aderholt and Ranking Members Merkley and Farr:

The undersigned organizations represent a broad range of agricultural commodity and farm member organizations along with members of the agricultural private sector that would benefit from lifting the trade embargo with Cuba.

American agribusinesses are continuing to lose market share in Cuba to the EU, Asia and South America. The U.S. currently ranks fourth in exports to Cuba where at one time we consistently and substantially were ranked first. Located just 90 miles from the U.S. coast, Cuba should be a prime and easy trading partner for American businesses.

Cuba currently imports up to 80 percent of its food resources with an annual value of nearly \$2 billion. With increases in tourism from the U.S. to Cuba, demand for food is expected to continue rising and it's important that U.S. commodities are offered the opportunity to fill that demand.

**Our organizations support the provision in the President's Proposed FY2017 Budget that would provide funding for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) employees to be housed within the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba.** Providing USDA boots on the ground in Cuba will help to provide U.S. agribusinesses the opportunity to obtain commodity market supply and demand figures, support the marketing efforts of U.S. exporters, assist in resolving phytosanitary barriers, and safeguard U.S. agriculture from the threat of new pests and diseases. We feel that funding these USDA positions in Cuba in anticipation of an eventual lifting of the embargo will help to make the transition process run more efficiently, assist U.S. agribusinesses to regain the role as Cuba's top exporter, and advance U.S. agricultural interests.

Chairmen Moran and Aderholt and Ranking Members Merkley and Farr, we appreciate your continued leadership in actively representing the agriculture industry's appropriations. Thank you for your consideration for funding the USDA positions in the FY 2017 spending bill.

Sincerely,

AGCO Corporation  
Agribusiness Council of Indiana  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Meat Institute  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Soybean Association  
Archer Daniels Midland Company  
Arkansas Rice Federation  
Arkansas Rice Growers Association  
Association of Equipment Manufacturers  
Bunge North America  
California Rice Commission  
Cargill, Incorporated  
CoBank  
Corn Refiners Association  
Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture  
Deere & Company  
Global Organics, Ltd  
Illinois Corn Growers Association  
Illinois Farm Bureau  
Illinois Soybean Growers Association  
Indiana Farm Bureau  
International Dairy Foods Association  
Iowa Corn Growers Association  
Kansas Livestock Association  
Kansas Wheat  
Livestock Exporters of the U.S.  
Louis Dreyfus Company North America  
Louisiana Farm Bureau  
Louisiana Rice Growers Association  
Minnesota Corn Growers Association  
Mississippi Rice Council  
Missouri Corn Growers Association  
Missouri Department of Agriculture  
Missouri Rice Council  
National Association of Egg Farmers  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Black Growers Council  
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 Sorghum Producers

National Sunflower Association  
National Turkey Federation  
Rural and Agriculture Council of America  
Smithfield Foods  
Strickland Ranch and Exports, Inc.  
Sun-Maid Growers of California  
Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group  
TRC Trading Corporation  
U.S. Canola Association  
U.S. Cattlemen's Association  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
U.S. Dry Bean Council  
U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association  
U.S. Poultry and Egg Export Council  
U.S. Rice Producers Association  
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council  
USA Rice  
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services