

Ag Groups Conduct ‘Substantive, Productive’ Meeting with Trump Administration on Trade

Washington, D.C. (March 15, 2017) – Executive staff leaders from 11 major U.S. agricultural and agribusiness organizations commended the Trump administration for engaging in a substantive and productive meeting today focused on the importance of continued growth of food and agriculture exports.

The meeting followed a series of written communications to the Trump administration from the broad-based U.S. Food and Agriculture Dialogue for Trade, as well as a number of the individual organizations, stressing the importance of agricultural trade. Those communications also have expressed an eagerness on behalf of the food and agriculture sector to work actively and constructively with the administration in preserving the major benefits of the North American Free Trade Agreement to the sector while seeking further improvements to modernize the 23-year-old accord, as well as to reinvigorate trade negotiations with important U.S. agricultural trading partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn participated in the meeting with representatives from the American Farm Bureau Federation, American Soybean Association, Corn Refiners Association, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Corn Growers Association, National Cotton Council, National Grain and Feed Association, National Oilseed Processors Association, North American Export Grain Association, Southern Peanut Farmers Federation and USA Rice.

“It is clear from this meeting and other interactions that the Trump administration understands and intends to pursue expansion of U.S. food and agriculture exports which contribute to U.S. manufacturing, job creation and economic growth,” the groups said following the meeting. “We are committed to offering substantive proposals and ideas, and look forward to further opportunities to work with the administration and its trade team as they develop specific strategies for engaging in trade negotiations with our most important trading partners. We are pleased that we received assurances from the Trump team that it will take us up on that offer.”

During the meeting, the agricultural organizations noted that 95 percent of their potential customers live beyond the U.S. border, and that the diverse food and agriculture sector supports more than 15 million U.S. jobs, creates more than \$423 billion in annual U.S. economic activity, and is the single largest U.S. manufacturing sector, representing 12 percent of all U.S. manufacturing jobs.

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