

TRADE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Promoting agricultural products at home and abroad is a primary responsibility for state departments of agriculture. NASDA is actively engaged on matters related to domestic marketing and promotion programs, the competitiveness of specialty crops, international trade agreements, programs to assist in the expansion of international markets for U.S. agricultural products, harmonization of technical standards, inspection and regulatory programs and programs that provide food aid.



BACKGROUND

State departments of agriculture operate on the front lines of U.S. export promotion – and for good reason. Food, agriculture and forestry exports provide a vital source of income to U.S. farmers, ranchers and companies, and they support rural prosperity. NASDA believes in maintaining fairness and equity in farmers and food businesses’ access to trading markets. NASDA advocates for a comprehensive approach to federal trade policy that emphasizes:

- Support of existing and creating new agreements that increase market access for U.S. products
- Development of new export markets
- Promotion of science-and evidence-based trade standards globally.

Without robust enforcement, trade agreements are nothing more than words on a page. State departments of agriculture stand ready and should be included more in supporting their federal partners across a wide range of implementation and enforcement activities, including trade promotion, technical assistance, data collection and monitoring. By working together, states and the federal government can help ensure that the benefits of new trade deals, like the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and Phase One of the U.S.-China trade agreement, are fully realized.




State departments of agriculture are also at the forefront of diversifying export markets for U.S. producers. The U.S. must keep pushing forward to remain on a level playing field with our competitors, and particularly so when the U.S. has fallen well behind competitors in the number and scope of global trade agreements.

REGULATORY ACTION

Seriously address the “Precautionary Principle”

NASDA supports a robust and beneficial trade agenda and encourages the Biden administration to pursue new opportunities for free and fair trade in agricultural products, while enforcing existing free trade agreements.



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NASDA is concerned about actions taken by Mexico and announced by the EU, to implement versions of the precautionary principle and use them as unscientific tools to restrict access to certain agricultural products and technologies. Chapter nine of the USMCA agreement relating to sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures requires that each Party (a) ensure that sanitary or phytosanitary measures implemented by a Party do not create unnecessary barriers to trade; (b) enhance transparency in and understanding of the application of each Party's sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures; and (c) encourage the development and adoption of science-based international standards, guidelines, and recommendations, and promote their implementation by the Parties.

Recent decisions by Mexico to reject certain crop protection products, and refrain from review and approval of new crop protection chemicals and agricultural biotechnology traits, have been based on a hazard only assessment model that runs in contrast to the worldwide accepted risk assessment practices of Codex Alimentarius and most food producing countries of the world. Such an approach ignores the requirements under USMCA that SPS decisions be founded on science-based risk assessments that incorporate an evaluation of hazards and the impact, if any, of various controls and measures that are taken, or that can be taken to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with those hazards.

NASDA, the Mexican Association of Secretaries of Rural Development (AMSDA), and the Canadian Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta have reaffirmed their commitment that the regulation, import and use of these critical tools be based on sound science and have collectively established a work group to promote this goal under the auspices of the Tri-National Accord.

The EU is even more bold and non-scientific, announcing its intent to eliminate many modern tools of production agriculture and insists that the world follow along. The net result of such action, as reported by the independent USDA Economic Research Service, will be significantly reduced productivity, growth in the emissions of greenhouse gases and a rise in global hunger.




NASDA'S ASK

To increase export opportunities for U.S. food, agriculture and forestry producers NASDA is asking Congress and the Administration to:

- **Leverage existing trade relationships and pursue and secure new agreements to increase market access and reduce non-tariff trade barriers**
- **Fully fund trade promotion programs**, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development program
- **Engage with global trade institutions**, including the World Trade Organization and Codex Alimentarius Commission, to promote use of standard setting processes long adopted by the U.S. and the vast majority of agriculture and food producing countries of the world.

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