

VIA FACSIMILE  
202-224-0103  
202-228-1371

February 1, 2010

The Honorable Blanche Lincoln  
Chair  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
355 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Ranking Member  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
416 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Sens. Lincoln and Chambliss:

The American Farm Bureau Federation supports President Obama's State of the Union comments calling for doubling U.S. exports over the next five years and aggressively seeking new markets while strengthening our trade relationships. We urge you as agriculture leaders to help reach the president's goals for increasing trade by encouraging the Senate leadership to pass the pending Colombia, Panama and Korea Trade Agreements. An aggressive trade agenda is important for the U.S. economy and the creation of American jobs.

About 25 percent of the total volume of U.S. farm production is exported, and many U.S. commodities have a much higher dependence on trade. The positive impact of exports will be diminished as long as the United States is not moving forward with an agricultural trade agenda. The drop in U.S. agricultural exports from 2008 to 2009 is estimated to have cost roughly 160,000 American jobs in the production, processing and transportation sectors.

We have estimated that Colombia, Panama and Korea Trade Agreements combined represent almost \$3 billion in additional U.S. agricultural exports. While our major competitors, like the European Union and Canada, move forward with their own trade agreements with these countries the United States remains hindered in these markets due to Congressional inaction.

Many other countries are negotiating bilateral and regional agreements that are reducing U.S. agriculture's competitiveness and market share around the world. By the end of 2010 there will be more than 600 bilateral and regional trade agreements worldwide with the U.S. engaged in fewer than 25. We hope that the president's call for doubling exports in five years will result in a new emphasis on increasing U.S. market access through trade negotiations and speedy enactment of the pending trade agreements.

Your leadership in Congress is needed now more than ever. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you to build support for an ambitious new trade agenda and passage of the Colombia, Panama and Korea Trade Agreements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Stallman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bob Stallman  
President