



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

600 Maryland Ave. SW | Suite 1000W | Washington, DC 20024

ph. 202.406.3600
f. 202.406.3606
www.fb.org

VIA FACSIMILE

202-224-9412

202-224-6020

January 29, 2010

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Sens. Baucus and Grassley:

The American Farm Bureau Federation supports the President'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.

Many other countries are negotiating bilateral and regional agreements that are reducing U.S. agriculture's competitiveness and market share around the world. By 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.

We urge you in your leadership role to help reach the President's goals for increasing trade beginning with passing 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.

Your leadership in Congress on trade 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. Your leadership in passage of the Colombia, Panama and Korea Trade Agreements will demonstrate that America is not willing to sit back and take second best when it comes to trade.

Sincerely,

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

Bob Stallman
President