

April 24, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Ambassador Jamieson Greer
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Secretary Rubio, Secretary Rollins, Secretary Kennedy, Administrator Zeldin and Ambassador Greer:

The undersigned organizations write to highlight the critical role of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in advancing international trade and global food security. We support the Administration's efforts to identify reforms across the UN system that promote fairness, advance evidence-based policymaking and protect U.S. interests. However, we also strongly encourage continued U.S. membership in FAO, and the simultaneous pursuit of reforms to increase the value of the organization to the United States.

FAO serves a vital organizational role in advancing science-based policies and leading initiatives that promote plant and animal health, enhance food safety, and support nutrition security. Critically, FAO administers the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), ensuring that international food safety and plant health standards are based on sound science and risk assessment which, amongst other objectives, reduce non-tariff barriers to trade for U.S. agriculture.

United States leadership provided through the direct participation of staff from your agencies in Codex is essential to maintain and bolster American influence over global food standards. Agricultural exports at meaningful levels will always be important to the United

States, its farmers and agribusiness, and as such now is the time for the United States to revitalize its Codex leadership and financial support to ensure the United States plays an active role in shaping that international standards that facilitate access for U.S. farmers, ranchers, growers and food manufacturers to external markets without onerous compliance requirements that increase costs and limit trade capacity.

In parallel, the IPPC sets global standards used to control pests, diseases, and weeds in shipments of many major agricultural commodities, including grains, planting seeds, fresh fruits and vegetables, and ornamental plants. These standards are critical for protecting U.S. farmers from potentially invasive species that could lead to losses in yield and reduce U.S. food security.

Continued U.S. leadership within Codex and the IPPC is also critical to ensuring that countries do not adopt unnecessary or unscientific barriers to trade, protecting American consumers and safeguarding the strength of U.S. agri-food supply chains.

Retaining U.S. membership in FAO also creates opportunities to drive constructive institutional reforms that will increase U.S. competitiveness and advance evidence-based policymaking. Failure to do so will empower our competitors and adversaries to move forward with international standards that benefit their economies to the detriment of the United States. Our organizations urge you to utilize your resources to pursue stakeholder supported reforms including strengthening FAO statements on the benefits of agricultural innovation and technologies, enhancing U.S. oversight of FAO reports and publications, aligning food security and nutrition initiatives with U.S. geopolitical and commercial objectives, and establishing an accreditation system for direct, multistakeholder participation in FAO. To deliver a successful FAO reform agenda, we encourage fully resourcing the U.S. Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome, including filling the Minister-Counselor for Agriculture position as soon as feasible.

We appreciate your attention to the importance of U.S. engagement with FAO, including maintaining and strengthening U.S. leadership in Codex and the IPPC. We encourage you to continue to dedicate the necessary resources, such as funding and dedicated staff, to such stakeholder priorities while working toward a FAO reform agenda that supports science-based policymaking and prioritizes American interests. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or the appropriate staff to discuss these matters further. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to strengthening our nation's agricultural trade and food safety policies.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
Almond Alliance
American Feed Industry Association
American Mushroom National Trade Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Spice Trade Association
Animal Health Institute
Biological Products Industry Alliance
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
California Citrus Quality Council
California Specialty Crops Council
Calorie Control Council
Center for Food Safety and Regulatory Solutions
Consumer Brands Association
Corn Refiners Association
CropLife America
Edible Oil Producers Association
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
Friends of IR-4 Coalition
International Council of Beverages Associations
International Council of Grocery Manufacturers Associations
International Dairy Foods Association
International Food Additives Council
International Fresh Produce Association
National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Fisheries Institute
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Potato Council
National Seasoning Manufacturers Association

National Sorghum Producers
National Turkey Federation
North American Export Grain Association
North American Millers' Association
North American Renderers Association
The Fertilizer Institute
U.S. Dairy Export Council
U.S. Grains Council
U.S. Meat Export Federation
U.S. Peanut Federation
U.S. Soybean Export Council
U.S. Wheat Associates
US Rice Producers Association
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
USA Rice Federation
Washington State Potato Commission
Wine Institute

cc:

The Honorable Howard Lutnick, Secretary of Commerce
Mr. Kevin Hassett, National Economic Council Director