

August 20, 2012

The Honorable Hillary
Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
United States Department of
State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of
Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20024

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

Dear Secretary Clinton, Secretary Vilsack and Ambassador Kirk:

The undersigned organizations representing a large component of the U.S. agricultural value chain appreciate your continued leadership in addressing global market access barriers to agricultural biotechnology. In particular, we commend recent efforts to increase coordination between countries that traditionally are net exporters of agricultural products (Argentina, Canada, Brazil and the United States) and have similar incentives, approaches and objectives for addressing market access barriers related to plant biotechnology. We encourage U.S. leadership in assembling these and other like-minded governments under a formal commitment and action plan to address market-access barriers to biotech plants and plant products.

U.S. exports of plant and plant products that may contain modern biotechnology are valued at roughly \$60 billion annually. Barriers to trade of these products include asynchronous approvals, redundant and unscientific data requests, arbitrary testing and misleading product labeling requirements. These barriers are significant factors in restricting access to needed supplies of agricultural products for consumers worldwide. Those most affected by these restrictions are acutely at-risk populations. These barriers also cost the U.S. economy and its farmers and agri-businesses jobs and millions of dollars annually. Ultimately, the barriers impede investment and capacity building that promise to be significant sources of improvement in global well-being and food and energy security. Today's global market dynamics are volatile and unpredictable, highlighting the critical and urgent need to mitigate barriers and improve global agricultural biotechnology trade and regulatory policies wherever possible.

We encourage the U.S. government to take a leadership role in urging senior-level delegations to convene at the upcoming meeting of like-minded countries planned for Rosario, Argentina in September. At that meeting the coalition should establish plans for working aggressively to address trade barriers related to plant biotechnology.

Short term objectives should include seizing the immediate opportunity with a public statement outlining principles for a robust work plan, including the establishment of a formal secretariat to coordinate and advance consistent regulatory approaches and formal efforts to improve the efficiency and predictability of global regulatory authorizations. The like-minded coalition work plan should provide for: 1) a coordinated effort to reduce gaps between the approval of a biotechnology event in exporting countries and importing countries (asynchronous approvals); 2) a commitment to significant and meaningful near-term progress in advancing the Global Low Level Presence (LLP) Initiative led by the Government of Canada; and 3) inclusion of additional like-minded governments, as appropriate, for broader impact and leadership.

A like-minded coalition is integral to success of the Global LLP Initiative. The senior-level focus of the like-minded coalition will catalyze the near-term potential of the Global LLP Initiative to increase global understanding of the long history of the safety of food and feed grains derived from agricultural biotechnology, and the need to reduce asynchronous approvals and develop practical approaches to

manage circumstances of LLP when synchronous approvals are not possible. Leadership within the Global LLP Initiative from the like-minded coalition is critical to ensure the application of sound scientific principles and promulgate proactive risk management mechanisms that can be put in place to allow trade to continue before and during the use of LLP policies.

Over the longer-term, we encourage the U.S. government to work with its counterparts to use the success of the like-minded coalition to conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements and influence international implementation of predictable, functional, practical, science based regulatory and trade policies for agricultural biotechnology. The long term objective should make harmonization and synchronization of as many policies as possible a priority, including mutual or even global recognition of risk assessments and decisions.

Finally we believe it is important that this effort be a public and private sector partnership. For instance just as technology providers, producers, traders and users of the products have been invited to participate in the Global LLP Initiative, we request that the like-minded coalition group also recognize industry as a willing party to assist in these efforts going forward.

Thank you for your continued work and support. Our organizations are encouraged by your proactive approach in working with like-minded countries. These actions have positioned the U.S. government and other major exporting nations to set a course to systematically dismantle barriers and improve the environment for agricultural biotechnology.

Our organizations look forward to an opportunity to discuss this with you and your staff at your convenience as we seek to work together to improve U.S. agriculture's capacity and contribution to the U.S. economy, global trade and food security.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Beet Growers Association
BASF Plant Science LP
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Corn Refiners Association
Monsanto Company
National Corn Growers Association
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
North American Export Grain Association
U.S. Grains Council

CC: Administrator Lisa Jackson, United States Environmental Protection Agency Commissioner
Margaret Hamburg, United States Food and Drug Administration
Under Secretary Robert Hormats, Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs, United States
Department of State
Under Secretary Michael Scuse, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, United States
Department of Agriculture
Ambassador Islam Siddiqui, Chief Agricultural Negotiator, Office of the United States Trade
Representative

Deputy Under Secretary Darci Vetter, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, United States
Department of Agriculture

Assistant Secretary Jose Fernandez, Economic and Business Affairs, United States Department of
State

Assistant United States Trade Representative Sharon Bomer-Lauritsen, Office of Agricultural
Affairs, Office of the United States Trade Representative