



## **Ag groups urge Obama Administration to fill ag trade posts**

By Sara Wyant

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Warning that “time is of the essence,” several leading food and agricultural organizations asked the White House to fill top trade positions focused on expanding agricultural trade and negotiating complex trade issues. In a letter to Nancy Hogan, White House Director of Presidential Personnel, the groups wrote that “it is urgent to name both a Chief Agricultural Negotiator in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and a Special Assistant to the President for Agricultural Trade and Food Assistance.

“While U.S. agricultural trade policy remains largely undefined pending these appointments, trade issues that our industries face around the world also persist. American agriculture is dependent on exports, and the economic health of rural communities and workers in related processing industries is tied to opening markets – and keeping those markets open.

“Continued vacancies in these top trade positions diminish the ability of the United States to effectively engage with our trading partners over critical issues, and could ultimately weaken the economic viability and employment in the U.S. agriculture and food sectors.

The groups pointed out that, last year, agricultural exports continued to grow at a record pace despite the economic downturn, and were one of the few sectors to generate a positive trade balance for the U. S. As such, “the economic benefits from this trade cannot be ignored.”

The letter was signed by:

AgriBank, FCB  
American Cotton Shippers Association  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Meat Institute  
American Soybean Association

Blue Diamond Growers  
California Cherry Export Association  
California Grape and Tree Fruit League  
California Kiwifruit Commission  
California Pear Growers  
California Table Grape Commission  
CHS Inc.  
CoBank  
Commodity Markets Council  
Corn Refiners Association  
Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S.  
International Dairy Foods Association  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Chicken Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Grape Cooperative Association, Inc.  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Renderers Association  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Sunflower Association  
North American Export Grain Association  
North American Millers Association  
Sunkist Growers  
U.S. AgBank, FCB  
U.S. Canola Association  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
US Hides, Skins & Leather Association  
US Wheat Associates  
United States Dry Bean Council  
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council  
USA Rice Federation  
Western Growers

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