

June 13, 2012

Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Pat Roberts, Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts:

As members of the Coalition to Promote U.S. Agricultural Exports, we are writing to express our strong opposition to a proposed amendment by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) to S. 3240 (Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012) that would reduce annual funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) by \$40 million and prohibit the use of MAP funds for certain activities. MAP is currently funded at \$200 million annually. It has been funded at this level since 2006. American agriculture and American workers continue to face increasingly strong international competition supported by considerable government-supported financial resources. Reducing funding for MAP would seriously undermine U.S. agriculture's ability to compete in this highly competitive international marketplace.

MAP is administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) where it forms a highly successful partnership between non-profit U.S. agricultural trade associations, farmer cooperatives, non-profit state-regional trade groups, small businesses and USDA to share the costs of international marketing and promotional activities such as consumer promotions, market research, trade shows, and trade servicing. By any measure, it has been tremendously successful and extremely cost-effective in helping maintain and expand U.S. agricultural exports, protect and create American jobs, strengthen farm income and help to offset the government-supported advantages afforded foreign competitors.

It is important to note that farmers and other participants are required to contribute as much as a 100 percent match of their own resources to be eligible to participate in the program. The participants are required to carefully evaluate and make strategic adjustments to their activities every year. The plans are submitted to FAS, which reviews every promotional activity to determine their eligibility and likelihood of success in increasing demand for U.S. agricultural exports. This analysis, in conjunction with in-country feedback from FAS overseas officers, determines whether activities merit funding. As a result, it is a very efficient, cost-effective program. In fact, a recent study by IHS Global Insight commissioned by USDA showed that, among other findings, for every additional \$1 (above the 2002 baseline) expended by government and industry on market development between 2002 and 2009, U.S. food and agricultural exports increased by \$35, **a 35 to 1 return on investment.**

MAP is a proven tool U.S. agriculture must have to compete in the international marketplace where our competitors continue to use their considerable government-supported financial resources to gain market share. We strongly urge that MAP continue to be funded in S. 3240 at no less than \$200 million annually, which is the same level as in the current Farm Bill and the level approved in April by the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee.

We appreciate this opportunity to express our views and urge you to strongly oppose the Coburn amendment, which would adversely impact U.S. agriculture in the international marketplace.

Sincerely,

Coalition to Promote U.S. Agricultural Exports

**ORGANIZATIONS SIGNING
COALITION TO PROMOTE U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS
LETTER TO STABENOW/ROBERTS OPPOSING COBURN AMENDMENT
June 13, 2012**

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute	National Grape Cooperative Association, Inc.
American Feed Industry Association	National Hardwood Lumber Association
American Hardwood Export Council	National Milk Producers Federation
American Meat Institute	National Pecan Growers Council
American Peanut Council	National Potato Council
American Pistachio Growers	National Renderers Association
American Quarter Horse Association	National Sorghum Producers
American Seed Trade Association	National Sunflower Association
American Sheep Industry Association	New York Wine & Grape Foundation
American Soybean Association	NORPAC Foods, Inc.
Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers Association	North American Blueberry Council
Blue Diamond Growers	Northwest Horticultural Council
Brewers Association	Northwest Wine Coalition
Calcot, Ltd.	Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.
California Association of Wheat Growers	Pet Food Institute
California Cherry Export Association	Produce Marketing Association
California Date Commission	Southern U.S. Trade Association
California Dried Plum Board	Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance
California Farm Bureau Federation	Sunkist Growers
California Fig Advisory Board	Sun Maid Growers of California
California Grape and Tree Fruit League	Sunsweet Growers, Inc.
California Pear Growers	Texas Quarter Horse Association
California Pistachio Export Council	Tree Top, Inc.
California Table Grape Commission	United Egg Association
California Tomato Farmers	United Egg Producers
California Walnut Commission	United Fresh Produce Association
California Wheat Commission	USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
Cherry Marketing Institute	USA Rice Federation
CoBank	U.S. Apple Association
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States	U.S. Dairy Export Council
Florida Citrus Mutual	U.S. Dry Bean Council
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association	U.S. Hides, Skins & Leather Association
Food Export Association of the Midwest USA	U.S. Meat Export Federation
Food Export USA – Northeast	U.S. Rice Producers Association
Ginseng Board of Wisconsin	U.S. Soybean Export Council
Hardwood Federation	U.S. Wheat Associates, Inc.
Hardwood Plywood and Veneer Association	Valley Fig Growers
Hardwood Manufacturers Association	Washington Apple Commission
Land O'Lakes, Inc.	Washington State Fruit Commission
Leather Industries of America	Washington Wine Institute
Mohair Council of America	Welch Foods Inc., A Cooperative
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture	Western Growers
National Association of Wheat Growers	Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association
National Confectioners Association	WineAmerica (The National Association of American Wineries)
National Corn Growers Association	Wine Institute
National Cotton Council	Wood Component Manufacturers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives	