

FOOD INDUSTRY CODEX COALITION

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Advancing Sound International Policy Through Science

August 24, 2011

Secretary Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

On behalf of the Food Industry Codex Coalition (FICC)¹, we write to commend U.S. Codex leadership displayed at several diverse Codex committees over the past year, and most recently at a session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in Geneva. Although there remains much work to do following the outcomes on certain key issues, including Ractopamine, it was clear that proactive U.S. outreach, education and communication efforts helped build a strong coalition of Codex delegations committed to supporting the scientific basis of Codex standards and the WHO/FAO expert committees.

As this letter reaches you, FICC members understand the Administration is facing critical budget decisions and, consequently, it is appropriate to emphasize the valuable contribution of Codex not only to protecting consumer health, but also facilitating fair food trade practices, and helping boost U.S. exports and facilitate imports of needed products. While fiscal 2011 U.S. Agricultural Exports are forecasted to reach a record of \$137 billion, these exports are still restricted by non-science-based measures that block market access for safe, high-quality U.S. food and agricultural products. International standards that are science-based and harmonized will open these markets, thus expanding U.S. exports and increasing jobs. Strong U.S. leadership and resources to support Codex are critical to achieving these goals.

In 1999, FICC members identified a need for the U.S. Codex Office to have a line item in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's budget and worked with members of Congress to achieve that end. Since that time, the FICC and subsequent administrations have continued to support the work of Codex, increasingly recognizing how continued international outreach helps advance the development of science-based standards and encourages other delegations to support U.S. positions.

¹ The FICC represents the interests of over 70 food companies and trade associations keenly interested in the international standard setting activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). FICC recognizes the critical role Codex serves to facilitate trade and protect consumer health. The coalition, which represents the entire food chain from production to retail, works to influence international food policy based on science. FICC members actively engage with U.S. delegates and Codex staff in an effort to support and strengthen U.S. leadership in Codex.

With this letter, the FICC urges continued, strong support of U.S. engagement with Codex, including adequate and dedicated resources to continue international outreach efforts aimed at building support for science-based decision-making that will help U.S. positions prevail in international standard-setting bodies and enhance U.S. agricultural and food exports.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Members of the Food Industry Codex Coalition

American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Frozen Food Institute
American Meat Institute
American Soybean Association
Association for Dressings & Sauces and the Vinegar Institute
Biotechnology Industry Association
Corn Refiners Association
CropLife America
Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association
Fresh Product Association of the Americas
Grocery Manufacturers Association
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils
International Dairy Foods Association
International Food Additives Council
International Formula Council
Juice Products Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Fisheries Institute
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
Pet Food Institute

Cc: Deputy Undersecretary Brian Ronholm
Deputy Undersecretary Darci Vetter
Al Almanza, FSIS Administrator
Suzanne Heinen, FAS Administrator
Karen Stuck, US Codex Manager