

 **NEWS RELEASE**

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USDA APHIS Removes Barriers to Trade and Expands Market Access for U.S. Farm Exports

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1, 2012—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has worked in conjunction with federal, international and industry partners to arrange for the release of 209 shipments of American products valued at more than \$39 million in 2012. The goods had been detained at foreign ports of entry pending resolution of various animal and plant health questions. In addition, APHIS has helped to open or maintain more than \$51 million in overseas markets for U.S. agricultural products. Under Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack’s leadership, USDA has aggressively worked to expand export opportunities and reduce barriers to trade, helping to push agricultural exports to record levels since 2009. The work of USDA agencies, including APHIS, and other federal partners helps to prevent and remove unwarranted barriers to trade, saving and securing American jobs and businesses, and supporting President Obama’s goal of doubling American exports by the end of 2014.

“APHIS works diligently every day to help ensure overseas markets for our country’s agricultural products,” said Rebecca Blue, deputy undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs. “In the past six months, APHIS has negotiated to reopen the Chinese market for U.S. log exports in a six-month pilot program, facilitated the first export of 1,400 cattle to Angola, helped California producers ship their stonefruit to important markets in Mexico, and arranged for the release of six shipments of cherries and \$1.5 million of cotton held at Chinese ports.”

APHIS addresses animal and plant health concerns that limit the export of American agricultural goods and negotiates with international trade partners to remove trade barriers and resolve trade-related issues. APHIS personnel stationed in countries overseas work closely with foreign regulatory counterparts to exchange information on agricultural health issues and ensure the safe trade of agricultural products. By working on these technical trade matters with overseas officials, as well as within international standard-setting organizations, APHIS personnel are in key positions to support U.S. agricultural exports and ensure that trading partners adhere to agreed-upon standards.

When American shipments are detained at foreign ports of entry, APHIS and other USDA officials negotiate with international officials to resolve the issue. APHIS’ team of technical experts certify that U.S. animal and plant products are free of pests and diseases and meet the entry requirements set by our trading partners. In negotiations to protect, expand, and

open new trade markets, APHIS advocates on behalf of U.S. agricultural industries to ensure a free flow of American agricultural products in international markets.

APHIS has launched a new website that will contain trade related information and accomplishments. The website will help exporters find information on APHIS's services, including trade information and regulations. It also serves as the news hub for APHIS trade updates, with links to trade-related feeds from the APHIS' Newsroom, Twitter, and the USDA blog. The website is located at: is <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/trade/>

U.S. agriculture is currently experiencing one of its best periods in history thanks to the productivity and resourcefulness of America's producers. Today, net farm income is at near record levels while debt has been cut in half since the 1980s. Overall, American agriculture supports 1 in 12 jobs in the United States and provides American consumers with 83 percent of the food we consume, while maintaining affordability and choice. Strong agricultural exports contribute to a positive U.S. trade balance, create jobs, boost economic growth and support President Obama's National Export Initiative goal of doubling all U.S. exports by the end of 2014.

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