



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Preserves \$4 Billion in Agricultural Exports in 2012 by Knocking Down Barriers to Trade

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1, 2013—Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today highlighted how the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) resolved dozens of export issues in 2012, freeing up an estimated \$4 billion in U.S. agricultural and forestry exports and protecting roughly 30,000 American jobs in the process. The work is highlighted on [Performance.gov](#), a resource for demonstrating how the Obama Administration is improving performance and accountability for the American people and businesses.

“As consumers around the world demand high-quality, American-grown products, USDA staff are monitoring more than 160 markets to ensure an open system of trade, free from unwarranted and unjustified barriers,” said Vilsack. “Since 2009, USDA has acted to remove hundreds of unfair barriers to trade for American companies and is providing businesses with the resources they need to reach new markets. These efforts have resulted in the most successful period in the history for American agriculture and a boon for America’s rural economies and agriculture-related businesses.”

Over the past year, USDA has aggressively worked to eliminate barriers, open new markets, secure the release of U.S. shipments detained at foreign ports, and ensure the safe movement of agricultural products in a manner consistent with science and international standards. Overall, a highly-dedicated group of USDA Foreign Service officers, animal and plant health experts, and analysts monitor 162 markets around the world, ensuring a level playing field for U.S. businesses and products. USDA works in partnership with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and other federal offices and agencies.

Currently, the American brand of agriculture is surging in popularity worldwide, while U.S. agricultural exports support more than 1 million jobs in communities across the country. Fiscal years 2009 through 2012 generated more than \$478 billion in agricultural exports, and 2013 agricultural exports remain on track to set new records. Overall, America’s agricultural sector is playing a key role in helping to achieve President Obama’s goal under the National Export Initiative of doubling exports by the end of 2014.

This success builds on USDA’s efforts to break down barriers to trade and expand access for U.S. goods around the world. Earlier this week, USDA announced that the Government of Japan—the fourth largest agricultural export market for the United States—agreed to expand access for U.S. beef. Under these new terms, which enter into effect on February 1, 2013, Japan will now permit the import of beef from cattle less than 30 months of age, compared to the previous limit of 20 months, among other steps. It is estimated that these important changes will result in hundreds of millions of dollars in exports of U.S. beef to Japan in the coming years. This agreement also goes a long way toward normalizing trade with Japan by addressing long-

standing restrictions that Japan introduced in response to bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

As American businesses look to reach the 95 percent of consumers outside of U.S. borders, USDA is providing support and service. For example, in 2012, USDA has been able to help conduct more than 110 trade shows around the world to help more than 1,000 U.S. companies make more than \$500 million in on-site sales. The majority of these were small and medium-sized businesses. While strong exports benefit farms and rural communities, agricultural trade is also a building block for a strong national economy.

Along with their federal partners, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) works to protect the health and value of American agriculture and natural resources in the international environment. Last year, APHIS successfully negotiated and resolved 150 animal and plant health issues involving U.S. agricultural exports. Examples include:

- Spearheaded a 6-month pilot program with China's animal and plant health authority which established [the resumption of log exports from Virginia and South Carolina](#), resulting in more than \$1.5 million in U.S. hardwood log exports to China from those States. The pilot program was recently extended by China. The pilot program signals renewed Chinese confidence in Virginia and South Carolina forestry exports. The United States exported more than \$7.7 billion in forestry products in 2011, supporting more than 65,000 jobs. During the first eleven months of 2012, U.S. log exports to China from all states reached nearly \$730 million. Nearly 25 percent of those exports landed in China, the second largest market for U.S. timber. Seaports in Virginia and South Carolina handled more than half-a-billion-dollars in U.S. forestry exports in 2011.
- Worked with Mexican officials to spur U.S. table eggs exports to Mexico valued at \$45 million per year.
- Secured Japanese market access for poultry and poultry products from New York, Ohio and South Dakota. In 2011, U.S. poultry exports to Japan totaled \$88 million.
- Supported the shipment of U.S. cattle to new markets in 2012 by engaging foreign counterparts in preparation for exports and approving seven temporary export inspection facilities to supplement the agency's permanent export facilities, reducing the distance cattle traveled before export and helping exporters meet shipping deadlines. Turkish and Russian purchases alone during fiscal year 2012 were valued at roughly \$300 million.
- Secured the release of 324 shipments of U.S. agricultural products detained at foreign ports, valued at more than \$41 million. For example, APHIS recently secured the release of seven grain shipments valued at \$1.8 million from the port of Haiphong, Vietnam, and the agency continues to work with Vietnamese officials and the U.S. grain industry on a permanent solution that will keep exports moving efficiently to that market.

There are approximately 170 Foreign Service officers in USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), staffing 98 offices covering 162 countries. U.S. farmers, ranchers, trade associations and private companies depend on FAS staff to guide them through export of their products. FAS provides reports on hot market prospects and offers expertise when trade barriers arise. Over the past year, FAS has helped to knock down hundreds of barriers to trade. Examples include:

- Negotiated the release of hundreds of detained shipments in dozens of countries, valued at well over \$60 million, and ranging from soybean meal in Latvia, to white zinfandel in the EU, rice bran pellets in Norway, Massachusetts scallops in Spain, and U.S. meat and poultry products in Taiwan.
- Began implementing trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama, ensuring duty free access for a wide variety of U.S. food and farm products expected to boost U.S. agricultural exports by more than \$2.3 billion per year when fully implemented, and support nearly 20,000 domestic jobs in the process.
- Negotiated expanded access for U.S. beef to the United Arab Emirates and El Salvador. In 2012, U.S. beef and beef product exports to United Arab Emirates and El Salvador reached \$47 million.
- Engaged with China on a memorandum of understanding on soybean trade that prevented disruptions to over \$12 billion of U.S. exports. Maintained market access for U.S. dairy—valued at over \$432 million in 2012—by coordinating a draft dairy export certificate with the government of China.
- Spearheaded negotiations with Indonesia to exempt countries with food safety recognition, including the United States, from new restrictions on a variety of imported fruit and vegetables. U.S. fresh fruit exports to Indonesia were \$110 million in 2012.
- Helped to negotiate the [organic equivalence arrangement with the European Union](#). This partnership between the two largest organic-producers in the world will establish a strong foundation from which to promote organic agriculture, benefiting the growing organic industry and supporting jobs and businesses on a global scale.
- Engaged with India on a measure likely to have halted U.S. apple and pear exports valued at nearly \$110 million annually.
- Expanded market access for U.S. potatoes in Asia, and positioned U.S exporters to take advantage of the U.S.-Korea Trade Agreement that permits duty-free entry of up to 3,000 metric tons of U.S. potatoes each year. Last year, the United States exported \$7 million of fresh potatoes to Korea.
- Worked with Mexico to remove a 16 percent tax on dehydrated U.S. cranberries that had been erroneously applied for two months.

The Obama Administration, with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, has aggressively worked to expand export opportunities and reduce barriers to trade, helping to push agricultural exports to record levels. U.S. agriculture is currently experiencing its best period in history thanks to the productivity, resiliency, and resourcefulness of our producers and agribusinesses. Today, net farm income is at 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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