

## **Open Letter From U.S. Producers, Processors And Exporters Of Food and Agricultural Products On West Coast Ports Slowdown**

The 92 undersigned food, agricultural and allied groups express their deep disappointment in the failure to resolve an ongoing labor dispute that has resulted in a severe slowdown of terminal activity at five west coast ports. This regrettable situation is having a severe impact on our ability to export agricultural and food products to many of our main export markets. Inevitably, these overseas customers will look to other sources for their supply of these goods. Similar to what we encountered after ill-advised export embargoes in the past, once lost, a foreign customer can be difficult to recapture. Additionally, the dispute is affecting imports from counter-seasonal production areas important for serving U.S. consumers.

A more immediate problem, however, is the effect the drastic reduction in containers being loaded is having on perishable commodities. Those goods are spoiling and being destroyed before they can be shipped or are being diverted to the domestic market at severe discounts. This represents an unconscionable waste of food products and a serious loss in revenue for U.S. producers.

The United States is the largest exporter of food and agricultural commodities in the world. Our sectors, as much as any in the economy, have taken full advantage of trade agreements negotiated over the past two decades to provide farmers, ranchers and other American businesses new opportunities for their output. Exports of agricultural products have grown from \$46 million in 1994 to \$144 billion in 2013 (the last full year for which data are available), and much of that growth has been to Asian markets, which are most directly affected by the ports slowdown.

The increase in food and agriculture products exported and imported has been extremely beneficial to the terminals and to the thousands of workers that handle shipments. The apparent indifference by parties in the dispute to the impact the slowdown is having on our sectors is disturbing.

We urge the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) to take into account the impact this dispute is having on many of their fellow Americans and to resolve their differences as quickly as possible. We also urge the federal government to consider all available remedies to bring this dispute to a rapid end. The interests and welfare of more than just the union and the terminals are at stake.

Agribusiness Council of Indiana

Agriculture Transportation Coalition (AgTC)

Almond Hullers & Processors Association

American Apparel & Footwear Association

American Farm Bureau Federation

American Feed Industry Association

American Frozen Food Institute  
American Malting Barley Association, Inc.  
American Potato Trade Alliance  
American Pulse Association  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Soybean Association  
Association of American Railroads  
Association of California Egg Farmers  
Basic American Foods  
CALAMCO  
California Cherry Export Association  
California Dried Plum Board  
California Farm Bureau  
California Fresh Fruit Association  
California Grain and Feed Association  
California League of Food Processors  
California Pear Growers  
California Rice Commission  
California Seed Association  
California Walnut Commission  
California Warehouse Association  
Corn Refiners Association  
CropLife America  
Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S.  
Farmers' Rice Cooperative  
Furniture Shippers Association  
Grocery Manufacturers Association  
Idaho Potato Commission  
Idahoan Foods  
International Dairy Foods Association

J.R. Simplot Company  
Juice Products Association  
Michigan Agri-Business Association  
Michigan Bean Shippers  
Midwest Food Processors Association  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Chicken Council  
National Confectioners Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Fisheries Institute  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Potato Council  
National Renderers Association  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Sunflower Association  
National Turkey Federation  
Naturipe Farms  
North American Blueberry Council  
North American Equipment Dealers Association  
North American Export Grain Association (NAEGA)  
North American Meat Institute  
Northharvest Bean Growers Association  
Northwest Horticultural Council  
Ohio AgriBusiness Association

Oregon Potato Commission  
Pacific Egg and Poultry Association  
Pet Food Institute  
Produce Marketing Association  
Promotional Products Association International (PPAI)  
Sunmaid Growers of California  
Sunsweet Growers Inc.  
The Fertilizer Institute  
U.S. Apple Association  
U.S. Apple Export Council  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
U.S. Grains Council  
U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association  
U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc.  
U.S. Soybean Export Council  
U.S. Wheat Associates  
United Fresh Produce Association  
United States Meat Export Federation  
US Canola Association  
US Dry Bean Council  
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council  
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council  
USA Rice Federation  
Washington State Potato Commission  
Western Growers Association  
Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association