



USDA ANNOUNCES MAP AND FMD ALLOCATIONS

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced the allocation of \$234.5 million to 70 U.S. trade organizations to help promote American food and agricultural products overseas.

The funding was allocated under the Market Access Program (MAP) and the Foreign Market Development (FMD) Cooperator Program, both administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

The MAP uses funds from USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to share the costs of overseas market development and promotional activities with U.S. nonprofit agricultural trade organizations, state regional trade groups, and cooperatives. Activities conducted with MAP funding include market research, consumer promotions for retail products, technical capacity building, and seminars to educate overseas customers.

Under the FMD program, USDA's CCC establishes a partnership with nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organizations. Funding priority is given to organizations that represent an entire industry or are nationwide in membership and scope. Program activities focus on reducing market impediments, improving the processing capabilities of importers, modifying restrictive regulatory codes and standards in foreign markets, and identifying new markets or uses for U.S. products.

Cotton Council International (CCI) will receive \$20,332,612 for market promotion activities under MAP funding and \$4,753,847 from the FMD allocation. Allocations reflect past outstanding program success, strong program proposals and commitments from the industry in matching contributions.

For more information about FAS's market development programs, contact the Office of Trade Programs at (202) 720-4327, or visit www.fas.usda.gov/mos/marketdev.asp

SECRETARY VILSACK FILLS KEY POSITIONS

Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack has announced the following appointments to key trade positions at USDA:

Darci L. Vetter will serve as the Deputy Under Secretary for the Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service (FFAS). Darci served on the United State Senate Committee on

Finance as an International Trade Advisor before joining FFAS. Her experience includes serving as Director of Agricultural Affairs for the Office of the U.S Trade Representative and Director of Sustainable Development. Her work dealing with a wide range of agricultural trade negotiations make her an invaluable asset to the USDA. Darci graduated from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs with a Master's degree in Public Affairs.

John Brewer will become the Administrator of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). Before becoming Acting Administrator of FAS, John worked for the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton as an Associate on the Global Security/Threat Finance Team. While at Booz Allen, John worked on a variety of intelligence and finance-related projects for firm clients, including the Departments of Defense, Justice, Homeland Security, and Treasury. In addition to his private sector experience, John brings to FAS more than a decade of experience in the federal government, working on U.S. policy toward Latin American and the Caribbean. John's international finance experience will be critical as FAS works to meet the challenges of expanding overseas opportunities for American agriculture. He holds a Master's degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science in the United Kingdom.

Janet Nuzum joins the Foreign Agricultural Service as Associate Administrator. Before joining USDA, Janet served as a Senior Policy Advisor to Congressman Cal Dooley and as a Professional Staff Member for the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means and Subcommittee on Trade. She has also worked as the Vice President and General Counsel for the International Dairy Foods Association. Following her Senate confirmation in 1991, Janet became Vice Chairman and Commissioner to the U.S. International Trade Commission where she ruled on trade practices and investigated the economic impacts of U.S. trade negotiations. Janet received her J.D. from Georgetown University.

TRADE GROUPS URGE SENATE TO CONFIRM NEGOTIATORS

A letter signed by over 40 food and agriculture groups expressed concern and urged Senate leaders to move quickly to confirm the nominations of Mr. Michael Punke to be Deputy U.S. Trade Representative based in Geneva, and Dr. Isi Siddiqui to be Chief Agricultural Negotiator in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

The letter to Senate Majority Leader Reed and Minority Leader McConnell stated that:

The U.S. needs strong leadership in these key positions and these gentlemen are eminently qualified to provide it.

On December 23, both nominations were approved by the Senate Finance Committee and, unless there are objections, a vote by the full Senate can now take

place at any time. We urge the Senate to confirm Mr. Punke and Dr. Siddiqui at the earliest possible date.

U.S. farmers, ranchers, and food companies are dependent on export markets. U.S. food and agriculture exports are under assault in many markets with trading partners erecting even more barriers in recent months. Ambassador Kirk and the staff at USTR face myriad challenges in both lifting these trade barriers and enforcing U.S. trade rights as well as negotiating new market opportunities. It is imperative that Ambassador Kirk have his entire trade team in place. The longer the delay in confirming Mr. Punke and Dr. Siddiqui, the more likely that the U.S. loses exports and jobs.

There is no justifiable objection to either nominee based on their qualifications. Mr. Punke served as international trade counsel for the Senate Finance Committee, followed by four years dealing with international affairs in the Clinton administration. These included two years as senior policy adviser at USTR for Ambassador Mickey Kantor. His trade policy background in both the Congress and the Executive Branch will provide him with invaluable perspectives on what will be needed in Geneva to achieve a successful WTO agreement.

Dr. Siddiqui served as senior trade adviser to Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman before becoming vice president for science and regulatory affairs at CropLife America. Earlier, Siddiqui served as under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs at USDA and spent 28 years with the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Dr. Siddiqui's work over the past several decades – both at the state and national level – will allow him to speak with expertise and authority in consultations with foreign agricultural negotiators.

We urge you to approve Mr. Punke and Dr. Siddiqui as soon as possible.

FRANK ATTENDS WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank (D-MA) will attend the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. According to a statement released by Frank, the main purpose of his trip will be to talk with financial services regulators from other countries to coordinate efforts to update and modernize financial regulations.

Frank said, "The objections to tough restrictions in the United States are that it will put American businesses in a disadvantaged position and financial companies will take their operations to friendlier shores. I believe this is wrong, and, in fact, since becoming chairman of the Financial Services Committee, I and other American officials have been working with others to prevent this situation from arising. The Obama administration has

correctly put a high priority on coordination with the major economies from around the world.”

The World Economic Forum is a gathering of virtually every regulatory official from the world’s major economies, as well as figures from the private sector and organized labor. Frank’s major goal is to further efforts at cooperation and work to prevent any national regulatory approaches that allows companies to dodge the kind of accountability and responsibility that is needed. The legislation passed by the House of Representatives, contains provisions to deny access to the U.S. financial system to any nation that holds itself out as an escape hatch to any financial company or financial activity. Frank is reported to be coordinating efforts with the European Union, United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, and other major economic powers to create a situation in which appropriate regulation can be imposed without fear of a loss of business to, or a destabilizing effect from, nations that will not join the with U.S. in regulatory reform.

CFTC ANNOUNCES PROPOSED RULE MAKING ON SPECULATIVE POSITION LIMITS

On January 26, the Federal Register released the Commodity Futures Trading Commission’s (CFTC) proposal to implement speculative position limits for futures and option contracts in certain energy commodities. The Commodity Exchange Act of 1936 gives the Commission the authority to establish limits on positions to diminish, eliminate or prevent excessive speculation causing sudden or unreasonable fluctuations in the price of a commodity, or unwarranted changes in the price of a commodity. In addition to identifying the affected energy contracts and the position limits that would apply to them, the notice of proposed rulemaking includes provisions relating to exemptions from the position limits for bona fide hedging transactions and for certain swap dealer risk management transactions.

The notice of proposed rulemaking also sets out an application process that would apply to swap dealers seeking a risk management exemption from the position limits, as well as related definitions and reporting requirements. In addition, the notice of proposed rulemaking includes provisions regarding the aggregation of positions under common ownership for the purpose of applying the limits.

Those wishing to respond to the proposed rule have 90 days to submit comments. Comments must be received on or before April 26, 2010. Comments should be submitted to David Stawick, Secretary, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Three Lafayette Centre, 1155 21st Street, NW., Washington, DC 20581. Comments also may be sent by facsimile to (202) 418-5521, or by electronic mail to secretary@cftc.gov. Reference should be made to “Proposed Federal Speculative Position Limits for Referenced Energy Contracts and Associated Regulations.” Comments may also be submitted by connecting

to the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> and following comment submission instructions.

The Federal Register notice for the CFTC's proposed rule can be found at:
<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-1209.pdf>.