

May 31, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Thank you for your leadership as you work to lessen the impact Russia's invasion of Ukraine has on global food prices. We are grateful for your efforts to build more resilient supply chains in the U.S. and across North America. The undersigned organizations represent America's highly innovative and competitive food and agricultural value chain. We are committed to working with you and your administration in ensuring availability of safe, accessible foods for all consumers.

As you work to strengthen the agricultural supply chain, please consider the benefits innovative agricultural tools play in sustainably increasing crop yields and enhancing plant tolerance to weather extremes. These technologies have been critical to allowing farmers to grow more food on less land using farming practices that are more environmentally sensitive. To address global food insecurity and the impacts to future food production from climate challenges, it will be critical to remove international barriers to innovation that stifles the ability to apply the full promise of this technology.

Unfortunately, acute and systemic trade barriers in markets highly integrated with the U.S. are restricting innovative agricultural tools and will further exacerbate food price inflation if left unresolved. Specifically, the Government of Mexico's policies on agricultural innovations are out of step with its commitments under the United States – Mexico – Canada Agreement (USMCA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and threatens market access for \$6 billion in annual food and agricultural exports to Mexico, potentially undermining food security and adding to the cost of food in North America. Mexico's counterproductive policies include:

- Blocking approval of safe new biotechnology traits. Mexico's barriers to agricultural biotech traits are neither science, nor risk-based. These impediments negatively impact American farmers' access to current and future innovations that promote increased agricultural productivity and sustainability and will drive up costs for consumers on both sides of the border.
- Denying the use of safe herbicides or other inputs used in conjunction with agriculture biotechnology. Mexico is phasing in import restrictions on specific agricultural pesticides and has delayed regulatory actions on over two thousand other products. These actions have cost U.S. companies more than \$500 million and undermine the harmonization of risk-based regulatory standards that had been the hallmark of the US-Mexico trade relationship.
- Disparaging products made from crops with biotechnology traits. Despite a virtual scientific consensus that products made from biotech crops pose no added risk to health or safety, government funded campaigns of disparagement have been pursued, and potentially disparaging food labeling requirements are being considered. Such practices threaten to mislead consumers, thwart use of safe technologies and highly disrupt supply chains with substantial inflationary effect.

Mexico's treatment of agricultural biotechnology is an impediment to rebuilding depleted global food stocks. It threatens further disruption of our global food supply chains, with fiercely adverse effects on food affordability for the least fortunate.

During the upcoming Summit of the Americas meeting, we respectfully urge that you engage Mexico's President Andrés Manuel López Obrador in a dialogue on the impact Mexico's policies have on food prices. Meeting our mutual goals of alleviating food price inflation and promoting a resilient North American food supply chain will require Mexico to adhere to its USMCA and WTO commitments regarding agricultural innovations. As such, the Government of Mexico should reestablish a timely, science-based regulatory process, forego disparagement of safe and approved products, and reaffirm its commitment to bilateral trade in agricultural products produced with biotechnology.

Should Mexico fail to honor these trade obligations, we trust your administration will utilize all available trade tools, including new enforcement mechanisms provided under USMCA, and conduct a review of the various food and agriculture trade agreements that grant Mexico preferential access to the U.S. market.

Mr. President, your leadership is critical. Our associations are ready to assist you and your administration to eliminate these barriers to develop a more resilient supply chain that limits consumer costs and better positions the U.S. and all North America for the strategic challenges of an uncertain world. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Bakers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Frozen Food Institute
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Calorie Control Council
Corn Refiners Association
CropLife America
Independent Bakers Association
International Food Additives Council
International Fresh Produce Association
National Confectioners Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Grain and Feed Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Seasoning Manufacturers Association, Inc.
North American Millers' Association
U.S. Grains Council

Cc: The Honorable Katherine Tai, Ambassador, U.S. Trade Representative
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary, U.S. Department of State
The Honorable Gina Raimondo, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce