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State Agriculture Officials Highlight Importance of International Trade for Agriculture

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) emphasized the importance of international trade and expanded markets for U.S. agriculture at their annual Winter Policy Conference today. NASDA members voted on a number of measures that called on the new administration to pursue new trade agreements that create opportunities for agricultural producers and to also ensure the interests of agriculture are front and center in international trade negotiations. The measures also renewed their call for expanded market access in the Asia Pacific to ensure the U.S. remains a leader on trade in this important region.

Dr. Michael G. Strain, NASDA President and Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture & Forestry, highlighted the importance of international trade to U.S. agricultural producers.

“American agriculture depends upon the opportunities created by international trade. Securing new market access and ensuring a level playing field in the international marketplace must be a top priority for the administration,” Strain said.

NASDA underscored the significant gains U.S. agriculture producers have made under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and emphasized that any renegotiation of the agreement must ensure the interests of agriculture are front and center. NASDA also voted to reiterate its significant concerns about recent actions taken in Canada that adversely impact U.S. dairy producers, actions that raise serious concerns with respect to Canada’s compliance international trade obligations under both the WTO and NAFTA.

The conference started with a panel discussion on key issues affecting agriculture policy in the year ahead. The panel, moderated by Agree Executive Director Deb Atwood, included Dr. Joe Glauber, International Food Policy Research Institute; John Bode, Corn Refiners Association; and Dr. Kathleen Merrigan, George Washington University.

During NASDA’s Animal Agriculture Committee, NASDA also passed actions items on the establishment of a Foot and Mouth Disease vaccine bank, indemnification for national animal health programs, and an enhanced National Animal Health Laboratory Network.

NASDA represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries, and directors of the departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. NASDA grows and enhances agriculture by forging partnerships and creating consensus to achieve sound policy outcomes between state departments of agriculture, the federal government, and stakeholders. The 2017 Winter Policy Conference is one of two annual meetings for NASDA. For more information about this event, please click [here](#).

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