



April 3, 2020

Ambassador Gregg Doud
Chief Agricultural Negotiator
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

The Honorable Ted McKinney
Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign
Agricultural Affairs
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ambassador Doud and Under Secretary McKinney:

The world is facing a new threat from the COVID-19 virus that has threatened global safety and put unprecedented pressures on the international food supply chain. The new uncertainty we face in light of this pandemic has underscored the necessity of keeping these supply chains strong and ensuring exports of nourishing foods can move smoothly across our borders.

Thank you both for your swift action to help resolve the import permitting issues that had hindered dairy trade between the United States and Mexico. We appreciate your leadership to coordinate a response across Departments to address the unintended consequences resulting from the guidance initially issued by the Mexican Ministry of Health (COFEPRIS) that threatened the export of essential food products to Mexico, including nutritious U.S. dairy products.

During a time where global health and wellbeing must take priority, we must ensure that Mexico and other global markets that rely on American exports have full access to a reliable supply of wholesome U.S. dairy products. Safe food supplies are needed now more than ever, and we appreciate the work you are doing to ensure that the dairy supply chain between the United States and Mexico remains strong and continues uninterrupted.

While we believe the progress made to date is highly positive, this is an important issue that we will continue to monitor closely. We anticipate that COFEPRIS regional/state offices will smoothly process import permits for food as expected; however, should further action be necessary, it is critical that we work together to fully resolve these delays so that the U.S. dairy industry can supply Mexico with the critical food products they need to keep store shelves stocked.

Thank you again for your continued dedication to America's dairy farmers, processors and exporters during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Vilsack', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Thomas Vilsack
President and CEO
U.S. Dairy Export Council