

February 6, 2023

The Honorable Alexis Taylor
Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Undersecretary Taylor,

The undersigned participants in the Food Industry Codex Coalition (FICC)¹ wish to congratulate you on your recent confirmation as Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs. We write to express our strong support for continued U.S. leadership of and engagement with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) and to recognize several of your staff for their excellent work managing a recent critical Codex meeting. We stand ready to be a resource for you and your staff on Codex and look forward to working together to build on important momentum that the U.S. Codex program has generated over the last several years.

Codex directly benefits the health and safety of American consumers in an increasingly globalized food system. By creating a science-based, level playing field through the development of international standards, it also enhances economic opportunities for American farmers, ranchers, food producers, manufacturers, transporters, suppliers, retailers, and the millions of other American livelihoods tied to the food and agriculture value chains. For these reasons, effective U.S. engagement with Codex is strategically beneficial both to safeguard American citizens and to facilitate trade, supporting continued economic growth in rural communities.

It is Codex's commitment to science-based decision making, risk assessment, transparency and participation by all relevant stakeholders that makes it exceptional and critical to U.S. food and agriculture producers. Yet, these commitments are increasingly being challenged by certain international stakeholders that seek to advance their national or regional trade agendas, try to push Codex beyond its scope and mandate, and/or undermine other foundational Codex values. United States leadership and resolute engagement with Codex is needed now more than ever.

Towards that end, we wish to recognize the outstanding efforts your USDA team put forth during the 45th meeting of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) this past November. We appreciate the dedication of USDA officials – the U.S. Codex Office in particular – and feel that the positive outcomes of the 45th CAC were a direct result of their tireless efforts. We owe special thanks to Jason Hafemeister, who led the U.S. delegation, Mary Frances Lowe, the head of the U.S. Codex Office, and Ken Lowery, who led the outreach effort that was so critical to United States' success.

The issues raised at the recent CAC were challenging, but your team met those challenges head on, securing welcome progress in various areas impacting the U.S. and global food industry that benefit producers, ranchers, and consumers alike. In particular, the recent wins in advancement of maximum

¹ FICC is composed of U.S. based food and agriculture companies and trade associations representing the entire food chain from production to retail. FICC recognizes and supports the critical role Codex serves to protect public health and ensure fair trade practices through the development and adoption of science- and risk-based food safety standards.

residue limits for the drug Zilpaterol Hydrochloride and the pesticides Clothianidin, Quinoxifen and Thiamethoxam provide strong examples of how science-based decision-making must be prioritized and serve as the foundation for Codex outreach and engagement on these, and other issues, for years to come. The extra efforts working across agencies and with foreign governments to secure participation and provide education made all the difference. Despite these notable wins, we expect continued threats to the Codex process and foundational Statements of Principles in the coming years.

The many important and unresolved issues remaining before Codex make this a critical time for the United States to maintain and increase its commitment to the institution. We count on your leadership and appreciate your attention to Codex as a priority going forward.

As we look towards a busy 2023 Codex calendar and to Codex's 60th anniversary celebration, the FICC is at your disposal to support you and your staff however we can. A group of FICC participants would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to discuss Codex priorities further. Your staff can contact Tony Rice (trice@usdec.org) to arrange logistics for a meeting.

Sincerely,

Almond Board of California	International Food Additives Council
American Bakers Association	International Fresh Produce Association
American Feed Industry Association	National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
American Frozen Food Institute	National Cattlemen's Beef Association
American Peanut Council	National Confectioners Association
Animal Health Institute	National Fisheries Institute
Calorie Control Council	National Milk Producers Federation
Consumer Brands Association	National Pork Producers Council
Council for Responsible Nutrition	National Turkey Federation
Corn Refiners Association	North American Meat Institute
CropLife America	North American Renderers Association
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States	U.S. Dairy Export Council
Food and Agriculture Export Alliance	U.S. Meat Export Federation
Institute for Shortening and Edible Oils	U.S. Soybean Export Council
International Association of Color Manufacturers	U.S. Grains Council
International Dairy Foods Association	USA Rice
Infant Nutrition Council of America	Wine Institute