

January 17, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Gina Raimondo  
Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

The Honorable Katherine Tai  
United States Trade Representative  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20508

The Honorable Michael S. Regan  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Secretary Blinken, Secretary Vilsack, Secretary Becerra, Secretary Raimondo, Ambassador Tai, and Administrator Regan,

The undersigned organizations strongly support the mission of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) and greatly appreciate U.S. leadership to encourage the adoption of science-based standards that help grow exports of U.S. food and agricultural commodities. We write to recognize and commend your staff's leadership and laudable efforts ahead of and during the recent meetings of the 85<sup>th</sup> Codex Executive Committee and 46<sup>th</sup> CAC. Thanks to successful execution of the U.S. interagency Codex strategy developed under the leadership of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the United States achieved multiple important outcomes that protect science-based Codex standards. This success supports continued market access for U.S. food and agriculture exports, preserves the Codex scope and mandate, and strengthens global commitment to risk-based decision-making.

Codex directly benefits the health and safety of American consumers at a time of 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 so 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 in Codex is needed now more than ever.

The positive outcomes delivered in Rome during the 46<sup>th</sup> CAC, particularly final adoption of the MRLs for Zilpaterol Hydrochloride and successful prevention of revision of key portions of the Codex Procedural Manual that ensure science and risk-based decision making, represent the culmination of years of interagency leadership and persistence to build coalitions of likeminded Codex members. They also provide strong examples of successful interagency Codex outreach and engagement that can be replicated when similarly impactful issues arise in the future.

These positive outcomes would not have been possible without the contributions of your staff, and several deserve particular recognition. We owe special thanks to USDA Undersecretary for Food Safety Emilio Esteban and Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Jason Hafemeister. Leading the U.S. delegation in Rome, they helped to unite U.S efforts behind a single strategy and did the outreach necessary to build a robust coalition supporting aligned position at the meeting. Additionally, the team at the U.S. Codex Office, specifically Mary Frances Lowe, Ken Lowery, and Marie Maratos, were essential in coordinating outreach and presenting the U.S. positions during the meetings. We would also like to commend Corey Watts (State), Brianna Robinson-Verloop (USDA), Robert Ahern (USTR), and the other members of the U.S. delegation to CAC.

We acknowledge and appreciate the important milestones delivered at the 46<sup>th</sup> CAC that protect Codex's science-based mandate, and we remain committed to working with your teams to support Codex into what promises to be an increasingly complex future. The stakes are high for U.S. food and agriculture exports, and we ask you to continue to empower your respective staffs to dedicate their time, resources and talents to this effort. Ultimately, we all share the goals of protecting science-based standards, ensuring global food safety and security, and supporting fair practices in food trade that maximize market access for U.S. producers.

Sincerely,

American Feed Industry Association  
American Frozen Food Institute  
Animal Health Institute  
Consumer Brands Association  
Corn Refiners Association  
Food and Agriculture Export Alliance  
International Dairy Foods Association  
International Fresh Produce Association  
International Frozen Food Association  
Meat Institute  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association

National Confectioners Association  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Pork Producers Council  
North American Renderers Association  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
U.S. Grains Council  
U.S. Meat Export Federation  
USA Rice  
Wine Institute