National Pork Producers Council
122 C Street, NW, Suite 875
Washington, DC, USA 20001

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Office of United States Trade Representative
1724 F Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

2026 AGOA Eligibility Review Comments – Nigeria and South Africa
Docket No. USTR-2025-0012

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) submits these comments in response to a Federal Register Notice (Document No. USTR-2025-0012) requesting comments on the eligibility of sub-Saharan African nations to receive Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) benefits.

NPPC is a national association representing the federal public policy and global interests of more than 60,000 U.S. pork producers. The U.S. pork industry is a major value-added sector in the agricultural economy and a significant contributor to the overall U.S. economy. More than 500,000 American jobs are supported by U.S. pork production with U.S. pork exports accounting for more than 70,000 of these jobs.

The United States is among the top global exporters of pork, shipping over 3 million metric tons (MT), valued at $8.63 billion, to more than 100 countries annually. Gaining and expanding access to markets around the world is paramount to the growth of the U.S. pork industry. NPPC supports the objectives of AGOA to expand U.S. trade and investment with sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), stimulate economic growth, encourage economic integration, and facilitate sub-Saharan Africa's integration into the global economy. NPPC also supports AGOA's trade preferences that allow eligible countries to enter the U.S. market duty-free, as long as those countries provide reasonable and equitable market access to U.S. exports.

The World Bank reports that SSA has experienced significant population growth since the 1960s, exploding from 227 million in 1960 to 1.34 billion in 2020, which is a nearly fivefold increase over sixty years. By 2050, the SSA population is estimated to reach 2.2 billion with one in four people globally being from SSA. While the region faces significant challenges, the opportunity for economic growth—especially among a growing middle class—is unprecedented and represents a unique and largely untapped export market for U.S. agricultural exports and pork, in particular.

However, when there are clear and persistent market access barriers for U.S. exports across AGOA-eligible markets, the benefits of AGOA should be withheld until such barriers are remedied. West Africa, particularly Cote d'Ivoire, represents a market growth opportunity for U.S. pork exports, but market access remains a barrier. Angola and Kenya also represent potential market opportunities, but access to Angola is stymied by lack of transparency and consistency in issuing import permits and market access is largely denied in Kenya.

The U.S. pork industry has struggled to gain reasonable and equitable market access for many years throughout the region, but South Africa and Nigeria have been especially difficult, despite AGOA benefits. Accordingly, we believe these two countries should demonstrate progress to remove those barriers to U.S. pork exports before receiving further benefits under AGOA.

South Africa

Pork is an important source of protein in South Africa, with total imports averaging $72 million from 2021 to 2023, primarily from the European Union, United Kingdom, and Brazil. Net imports average less than nine percent of South Africa's consumption; the rest is produced domestically. Virtually none of this came from the United States, even though the United States accounts for 30 percent of the global pork trade. South Africa could be a significant and growing market for U.S. pork producers, but unfortunately, our exports are hampered by unwarranted, non-scientific restrictions that are preventing the United States from realizing reasonable and equitable access to the South African pork market. These restrictions, which are inconsistent with international standards, include:

- No market access for pork offals, heat-treated/canned products, and casings
- The unjustified restriction that lymph nodes must be removed from shoulder cuts and a lack of guidance regarding this requirement
- Stringent, non-science-based, trichinae-related freezing requirements on U.S. pork. The United States does not require trichinae testing for U.S. pork because trichinae is not an issue in U.S. commercial pork production.
- Limits on pork cuts allowed for importation due to concerns related to Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) and the pseudorabies virus (PRV). These restrictions are inconsistent with U.S. and international standards.

South Africa has an obligation under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) to ensure that its SPS measures are only applied to the extent necessary to protect life or health (cf. SPS Agreement Article 2.2 and Article 5.1). Despite repeated engagement from the U.S. government and industry, South Africa has yet to remove these trade barriers and has imposed control, inspection, and approval requirements beyond what is reasonable, necessary, and appropriate (cf. SPS Agreement Annex C).

The continued presence of these restrictions suggests that South Africa is not meeting its WTO SPS Sec. 104 obligations to make continual progress on the elimination of barriers to U.S. trade and investment. Because of these persistent, unjustified barriers, the United States is losing tens of millions of dollars in exports, which adversely impacts associated U.S. jobs. The ban on variety meats (internal organs) is particularly harmful. While limited demand for these products exists in the United States, variety meats are in strong demand in South Africa and other international markets. Imports of internal organs totaled $122 million in 2023, with China accounting for 62 percent of the market (0504). Gaining access to these markets allows U.S. pork producers to increase the value of each hog sold while providing international consumers seeking these products with an affordable, safe option. In 2015, U.S. beef gained greater access to the South African variety meat market and expanded exports to $11.6 million in five years and stood at $13.1 million in 2023. NPPC hopes to gain similar benefits for U.S. pork exports, but only if it is provided equitable treatment. Expanding access to variety meat markets also reduces rendering and landfill disposal, which supports the industry's sustainability efforts.

South Africa is currently the largest non-oil beneficiary of AGOA, exporting some $14.7 billion in goods to the United States in 2024, which was a 4.9 percent increase over 2023. South Africa also takes advantage of the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, which gives duty-free treatment to certain goods entering the United States. Although South Africa is the largest beneficiary of the AGOA program, it remains unwilling to extend reasonable and equitable treatment to imports of United States pork. As a result, NPPC urges the Administration to remove South Africa's eligibility for AGOA benefits.

Nigeria

Despite being the second largest AGOA beneficiary, exporting $5.7 billion in 2022, Nigeria has continued to block U.S. market access for pork. Nigeria has a rapidly growing population of more than 236 million people, with an associated increase in protein consumption trends. It could also serve as a useful trade hub for U.S. exports to neighboring African countries. We believe there is strong market potential for U.S. pork in Nigeria.

While Nigeria began allowing pork sausage imports from the U.S. in early 2022, it has maintained an express prohibition against the importation of raw pork (all swine-related tariff lines under HTS 0203, 0206, and 0210.10), as well as other meats and associated products. Nigeria's restrictions against U.S. pork products are non-science based, clearly violate GATT Article XI.1, and must be eliminated. NPPC is working to gain market access without any mitigations and encourages the requirement of science and risk-based policies and practices. For this reason, we call for the removal of Nigeria's eligibility for AGOA benefits.

As previously noted, NPPC is an active supporter of expanded trade. However, NPPC does not support AGOA countries reaping the rewards of preferential U.S. tariff programs while providing significantly limited market access for U.S. pork.

Thank you for your consideration.

Maria C. Zieba
Vice President of Government Affairs