July 30, 2026

Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

2026 AGOA Eligibility Review Comments (USTR-2026-0298)

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) submits these comments in response to a Federal Register Notice (Document No. USTR-2026-13177) requesting comments on the eligibility of sub–Saharan African nations to receive Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) benefits. We noted the comments issued by others in the agriculture sector, such as the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council (USGBC) and wish to echo some of the points they raised and provide additional perspective.

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 $8.4 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 five-fold 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. Cote d'Ivoire has a growing trade goods deficit with the United States despite AGOA benefits. While Ghana officially accepted U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)-issued export certificates staring in 2023, it has maintained a defacto ban on U.S. pork. 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. South Africa's trade deficit with the United States continues to grow, while Nigeria has moved from a goods trade deficit to a trade surplus. Accordingly, we believe these two countries should demonstrate progress to remove barriers to U.S. pork exports before receiving further benefits under AGOA.

AGOA Goods Trade Benefits for Markets of Importance to U.S. Pork – 2025

Country	2025 AGOA Benefit*	U.S. Goods Imports 2025**	U.S. Trade Deficit /Surplus 2025***	Change	Importance for U.S. Pork
South Africa	$322.7 million	$16.5 billion	$10.1 billion	13.9%	South Africa is only the third largest importer of U.S. agriculture products despite its population and income. Agricultural imports were down by 10% in 2025 to $566.9 million. It takes advantage of the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, which gives duty-free treatment to certain goods entering the United States.

Nigeria	$45.3 million	$5.0 billion	+$1.8 billion	220.1%	Nigeria expanded access for U.S. meat and poultry products in June of 2026 accepting FSIS Export certificates. It could also serve as a useful trade hub for U.S. exports to neighboring African countries. Nigeria is the fifth largest importer of U.S. agricultural products, importing $229.2 million in 2025. Market potential for U.S. pork is estimated at $26 million.
Cote d’Ivoire	$158.1 million	$1.9 billion	$1.3 billion	201.4%	Côte d'Ivoire was the top high-growth markets for U.S. agricultural exports, importing $1.6 billion of agriculture products in 2025, and showing an impressive 97% increase. USDA FAS consistently ranks pork and pork products as the second-highest growth category for food imports into the country.
Ghana	$95.9 million	$1.2 billion	+$63.4 million	130.8%	Ghana is the second largest importer of U.S. agriculture products, importing $776 million in 0225, a 185% increase over 2024. Ghana accepted an FSIS export certificate in 2023. Pork market is valued at about $16 million annually.
Angola	$0	$871.1 million	+$306 .7 million	125.6%	Angola is the largest market in Africa for U.S. poultry exports ($127 million in 2025). Because robust maritime shipping routes, cold storage infrastructure, and import-distributor relationships are already established, U.S. pork is a natural, friction-free next step for local distributors. There is immense cultural demand in Angola for pork variety meats—such as pig feet, ears, tails, and stomach.
Kenya	$37.3 million	$858.9 million	+131.9 million	285.4%	Kenya is a large growth market for agricultural products. Imports increased by 50% to $187.3 million in 2025, the growth was driven largely by tree nuts and vegetable oil.

*USITC Dataweb – Sub-Saharan Africa Trade Report. Represents the benefit for agriculture only, not all goods.

**Represents goods from the United States as reported by USTR under its Africa region page from USITC Dataweb. Click on each country to see full trade statistics.
***A plus sign indicates that the country maintains a trade surplus with the United States as opposed to a trade deficit.

South Africa

During the renewal of the AGOA in 2016, South Africa agreed to partially lift its ban on U.S. pork. However, since then, South Africa has continued to impose multiple restrictions on the importation of pork, so very little has been exported. Conversations with South Africa must include negotiations on full market access without restrictions. Upcoming trade discussions on the extension of AGOA may provide an opportunity to finally address some of these long-standing market barriers.

Pork is an important source of protein in South Africa, with total imports totaling about 50,000 tons averaging $51 million in 2025 (SAPPO), primarily from Brazil, the European Union, and the United Kingdom. Net imports averaged about 6.5% of South Africa's consumption – the rest is produced domestically. However, virtually none of this came from the United States. The United States exported a mere $306,000 in 2025, and $662,000 in 2024, even though the United States accounts for over 30% 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 offal, 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; and
- 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 also 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 not limited control, inspection, and approval requirements to 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 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 and associated U.S. jobs. The ban on variety meats (internal organs) is particularly harmful. Gaining access to this market would allow 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 has long hoped to gain similar benefits for pork exports if provided equitable treatment. Expanding access to variety meat markets also reduces rendering and landfill disposal, which supports the industry's sustainability efforts.

South Africa has refused to address claims that it unjustifiably restricts pork imports due to PRRS by mandating that raw pork from PRRS-positive countries, including the United States, must undergo extensive risk-mitigation processing, including removing lymph nodes. The U.S. Trade Representative has repeatedly argued at the WTO SPS Committee that there is no documented case of PRRS transmission through commercially traded frozen pork, based on World Organization for Animal Health's (WOAH) Terrestrial Code (Chapter 15.3), and that South Africa should adopt science and risk-based requirements in line with its WTO commitments. Instead, South Africa has continued to assert that lymph nodes were removed improperly during inspection of a trial shipment in 2017, and that it maintains market access by allowing the product to undergo heat treatment to inactivate the PRRS virus at an approved establishment before entering South Africa. The United States should seek amendment of the Meat Safety Act (Act 40 of 2000) requiring the removal of the PRRS requirements prior to an extension of AGOA benefits.

South Africa has significant demand for variety meats but many variety meats and casings, even those that are heat-treated or canned remain entirely banned due to concern over PRRS and pseudorabies virus (PRV). WOAH's Terrestrial Code (Chapter 8.2) states that PRV is highly susceptible to heat and that heating to an internal temperature core of 70°C for 30 minutes is sufficient to inactivate the virus. South Africa has failed to provide a transparent risk- based justification violating its obligations under Article 5.1 of the WTO

SPS Agreement. The United States should seek amendment of the [Meat Safety Act (Act 40 of 2000)] acknowledging the safety of heat-treated variety meats and casings.

South Africa also continues to maintain stringent freezing requirements related to Trichinae as part of the 2021 "Guidelines for the Sampling, Transportation, and Handling of Samples for the Microbiological Monitoring of Meat" that fall under the legislative mandate of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act No 40 of 2000), despite *Trichinella spiralis* not being present in U.S. commercial pork production. USDA has provided evidence to South Africa that Trichinella has not been detected in the U.S. commercial swine herd in well over a decade, and that tests conducted by the USDA under the Agricultural Marketing Service Trichinae Export Program, demonstrated the prevalence of Trichinella in the U.S. is 0.194 per 1 million animals. These requirements should be lifted prior to the extension of any AGOA benefits for South Africa.

Nigeria

Nigeria began allowing pork sausage imports from the U.S. in early 2022, its largest import category, but continued to maintain 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. On April 1, the Government of Nigeria approved the 2026 Fiscal Policy Measures and Tariff Amendments which included some limited new access for raw U.S. pork including carcasses and half-carcasses of swine, frozen, fresh, or chilled; fresh or chilled hams or shoulders with bone-in, and fresh, chilled or frozen loins. Prohibitions remain, however, on edible offal of swine; frozen hams, shoulders with bone in; and meat of swine (including bellies and cuts thereof), salted, in brine, dried or smoked. There is no food safety reason to prohibit frozen product and to allow the same fresh, chilled product.

Nigeria also continues to prohibit the import of all U.S. offal, which is the largest import category behind sausages. Nigeria has justified its import prohibitions on pork and other agricultural products by citing section B of GATT Article XVII (paragraphs 8 to 12 of Article XVII) which provides for special balance of payment exceptions for developing countries, yet it has failed to notify its measures to the Balance of Payments Committee under the Committee on Agriculture. Nigeria's restrictions against U.S. pork products are non-science-based, and clearly violate the GATT as the measures are not temporary and Nigeria has had a positive balance of payments in 2022 - 2024. While Nigeria has opened some access for raw pork from the United States, it is unlikely these changes will result in additional meaningful market access. Nigeria should eliminate its ban on raw pork and open its market if it wishes to continue to benefit from AGOA.

<u>Cote d'Ivoire</u>

While pork exports to many Muslim-majority countries in Africa are limited, there is potential for U.S. pork exports to Cote d'Ivoire. However, U.S. exports are limited by clear and persistent market access barriers, including a lack of clear import requirements, as well as a lack of transparency and consistency in issuing final regulations without public comment. Exporters must pay for rigorous laboratory testing in the country of origin to prove the absence of pathogens like African Swine Fever (ASF) and Classical Swine Fever, despite certification. Imports are subject to physical inspections by the *Direction des Services Vétérinaires* (DSV) upon arrival. If a shipment is flagged, the importer bears the storage costs at the port, which can quickly exceed the profit margin of the meat itself. Imports also require a preliminary import authorization, Autorisation Préalable d'Importation (API). The API is issued by the Ministry of Animal and Fishery Resources and can often encounter signature delays that result in export delays and the meat never receiving approval to depart the exporting country.

<u>Ghana</u>

While the Ghanaian market has been officially open to U.S. pork since January 12, 2023, it maintains a defacto ban and has failed to source any product from the United States. The market is heavily dominated by the European Union who benefits from long-standing trade relationships, shorter shipping distances, and lower logistics costs; however, the lack of U.S. imports may be due more to political sensitivities than food safety concerns or market competitiveness. The introduction of U.S. pork met fierce resistance from local agricultural groups. Civil Society Organizations and local pig farming associations have threatened legal action against Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture over fears that affordable U.S. imports would flood the market and decimate the local swine industry.

<u>Angola</u>

Potential for U.S. pork exports to Angola exists but is limited by clear and persistent market access barriers, including presidential bans and restrictions on agricultural imports. Specifically, a lack of transparency and consistency in issuing import permits stifle U.S. market access in order to protect domestic agricultural production. Pork is included on a list of products that require a non-automatic import license. This means the government can deny licenses based on the current supply situation. To obtain an import license, importers must often prove they have first attempted to source pork from local Angolan producers. This "local content" requirement acts as a major deterrent for high-volume US exporters. The United States should require Angola to eliminate its import licensing regime for pork.

Kenya

Potential for U.S. pork exports to Kenya exists, particularly for hearts and livers. Unfortunately, Kenya effectively bans U.S. pork by providing no clarity on market access provisions. Kenya also maintains complex, nontransparent, and costly requirements for the importation of all meat, dairy, and poultry products, which effectively deters imports. Starting in 2026, U.S. pork must now undergo mandatory physical inspection upon arrival by the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS). This inspection carries a fee of 0.6% of the customs value and significantly increases the risk of delays, demurrage charges, and potential rejection while the meat sits at the Port of Mombasa. Kenya, similar to South Africa, does not recognize the U.S. system of food control for *Trichinella spiralis*. Kenya should eliminate its freezing requirements for U.S. pork. Kenya also strictly prohibits the use of ractopamine, despite international standards organizations such as the Codex Alimentarius having established safe limits for use. Kenya should adopt Codex limits for ractopamine. Finally, importers must obtain an import permit from the Director of Veterinary Services (DVS) which can be withheld based on local supply. Kenya should eliminate its import licensing requirements.

In Summary

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 without addressing long-standing non-tariff and other markets access barriers that significantly limit market access for U.S. pork.

Thank you for your consideration.

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