



**NATIONAL POTATO COUNCIL**

1300 L Street, NW, Suite 910  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 682-9456 phone  
[www.nationalpotatocouncil.org](http://www.nationalpotatocouncil.org)

August 16, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

The U.S. potato industry would like to thank you for the strong support of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) in seeking to open export markets for U.S. potatoes.

In particular, we sincerely appreciate your efforts to fully open the Mexican market to U.S. fresh potatoes. Those efforts were highlighted in your testimony before a recent House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee hearing where Congressman Cuellar (D-Texas) asked you about expanding the current \$2 billion U.S. market for Mexican avocado farmers even larger;

*Rep. Cuellar (D-TX) – “I sent you a letter along with other Texas Members and we are still waiting for a response. There’s an APHIS final rule published May 28, 2016 dealing with avocados. We are waiting for the required operation workplan that has to be signed where we bring in from the state of Jalisco. Right now, we are just dealing with the state of Michoacán, but we’re trying to expand and make sure there’s no risk to the public. If you haven’t seen it, please sign it.”*

*Secretary Perdue – “I know this is important to Mexico. We would also like to resolve the potato issue.”*

Though we recognize that the two market access issues cannot be formally linked, as they must be considered both by Mexico and the U.S. based upon the best available science, it makes great sense that their parallel paths should be concluded concurrently. Providing enhanced access for Mexican avocado farmers absent a reciprocal benefit to U.S. potato producers would be a missed opportunity and serve to compromise a potential \$150+ million annual export market.

As you recall, U.S. potato growers have sought full access to Mexico for over 16 years without success. During this same time, Mexican avocado growers have built a \$2 billion annual export market in our country.

The commitment of USDA personnel both in Washington, D.C. and Mexico in correcting this

imbalance certainly merits our thanks and appreciation. We look forward to the successful conclusion of the full opening of the Mexican market to U.S. fresh potatoes in the very near future.

Sincerely,

National Potato Council

Colorado Potato Administrative Committee

Empire State Potato Growers

Idaho Grower Shippers Association

Idaho Potato Commission

Maine Potato Board

Potato Growers of Michigan

North Carolina Potato Association

Oregon Potato Commission

Pennsylvania Co-Operative Potato Growers

Virginia Potato and Vegetable Growers Association

Washington State Potato Commission

Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association