



*Blue Diamond Growers
California Apple Commission
California Cherry Export Association
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Grape and Tree Fruit League
California Minor Crops Council
California Pear Advisory Board
California Strawberry Commission
California Table Grape Commission
California Tomato Commission
California Walnut Commission
Florida Tomato Exchange
Imperial Valley Vegetable Growers
Association
Michigan Farm Bureau Federation
New York Farm Bureau Federation
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Oregon Farm Bureau Federation
Prune Bargaining Association
Sunkist Growers*

August 15, 2003

Secretary Ann Veneman
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

Ambassador Robert Zoellick
U.S. Trade Representative
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Secretary Veneman and Ambassador Zoellick:

The Doha Round presents a unique opportunity for the horticultural industry to correct inequitable trade policies that place our producers at a competitive disadvantage. For this reason, we have formed the HORT Alliance, a coalition dedicated to pursuing aggressive and meaningful reform in the WTO agricultural rules governing market access, trade distorting internal supports, the use of export subsidies and the treatment of import sensitive items.

As you are aware, many U.S. fruit and vegetable producers have little or no tariff protection and receive little, if any trade-distorting (amber box) supports. Further, U.S. fruit and vegetable exports are not subsidized. However, many of our trading partners still protect their market by maintaining high tariffs on horticultural imports, while others subsidize the production and/or the export of certain fruits and vegetables.

Our coalition will work with U.S. negotiators to secure modalities that will correct these disparities. However, if the reformed modalities fall short of helping U.S. horticultural commodities, the coalition will likely request more significant reform than provided for in the overall agricultural agreement. For this reason, we request that any agreement in Cancun include language that encourages members to consider the modalities agreed upon to be the minimum reform required, and invites WTO members to negotiate more aggressive reform on a sector by sector basis – a sectoral negotiation.

As you are aware, the Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee on Fruits and Vegetables supports the negotiating concept of a sectoral agreement. We respectfully request your assistance in ensuring the documents that emerge from Cancun include language supporting sectoral negotiations.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Your attention to U.S. fruit and vegetable trade issues in the Doha Round is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

The HORT Alliance

Horticultural Organizations for Responsible Trade