TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER

May 26, 2010

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

It is important for the continued expansion of organic agriculture that the United States obtain an agreement of equivalence for organic certification standards with the European Union (EU). The current need to obtain both certification through the National Organic Program and recognition with the EU prior to exporting certified organic products from the United States to the EU places a costly and unnecessary burden on organic producers and handlers.

The lack of an equivalency agreement with the EU also has impeded trade and stifled potential growth of the domestic organic agriculture market. I commend those who worked to sign the equivalency agreement with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and hope it will be utilized as a model for further expansion of domestic organic products into the global market.

As public servants, it is our responsibility to be proactive and seek trade agreements that will maximize gains for American producers and manufacturers, while ensuring the integrity of imported products sold to domestic consumers. As always, Texas stands ready and willing to assist by producing premium products and providing the highest standard of consumer protection.

Sincerely yours,

Todd Staples

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