

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER**

TRADE ACTION NETWORK

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE US-KOREA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

DATE: 02/23/2012

The Office of the United States Trade Representative has announced the US- Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will take effect on March 15, 2012.

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples has worked diligently to establish mutually beneficial trade partnerships that will expand and open new markets for Texas farmers and ranchers to sell their products. Through this FTA with South Korea, Texas farmers and ranchers will have access to America's fifth largest agricultural export market, worth \$7 billion in 2011 and home to nearly 50 million consumers. Under the agreement, agricultural exports to South Korea are expected to increase by at least 44 percent, with some estimates as high as 89 percent. The U.S. International Trade Commission reports the FTA with South Korea could create 70,000 new U.S. jobs.

"After years of pushing for this pact, we are pleased to finally see this U.S.-Korea trade agreement take effect on March 15," said Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples.

"Ninety-five percent of the world's consumers live outside the borders of the United States. This agreement will create tens of thousands of jobs and greatly expand export markets for American farmers and ranchers. Agriculture is one of the most export-dependent sectors of our nation's economy and as a leader in U.S. agriculture, Texas is in a unique position to benefit from this hard-fought resolution. I look forward to building a strong trading partnership with the people of South Korea, and to meeting increased consumer demand for Texas agricultural products in this new market."

Under the agreement, two-thirds of all current U.S. agricultural exports to South Korea will become duty free immediately. Among the duty free products are cotton, wheat, corn, hides and skins, almonds and wine. Additional tariff reductions on products such as cattle and beef, poultry, grapefruit, lettuce, mushrooms and sweet corn will be phased out incrementally.

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