

USDA Farm Bill Forum
Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns
Minot, North Dakota
July 26, 2005

Subject: WTO/CUBA Trade

My name is (Greg Johnson)  I am a
processor of dry peas, lentils and chickpeas in

Minot, North Dakota. My brother still farms our home place
south of Minot.

As a processor of pulse crops I am most concerned about the
ability of U.S. farmers, processors and exporters to compete in
the global market place.

**WTO- I have spent many years observing the
GATT/World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. I
believe our U.S. negotiators have a responsibility to level**

the playing field and deliver an agreement that allows U.S. agriculture to compete fairly. The last WTO agreement allowed our competitors in Europe to receive \$5 dollars of domestic support for every one \$1 received by a U.S. grower. The last WTO agreement allowed the continued use of export subsidies; state sponsored trading enterprises, extremely high tariffs in developing countries and weak disciplines on phytosanitary requirements. The WTO negotiations do not even address currency manipulation by our competitors which is one of the biggest obstacles we face as U.S. shippers.

I support the current WTO negotiations if the result is an agreement that puts U.S. agriculture on an EQUAL

playing field with other countries. President Bush recently announced his desire to reduce agricultural subsidies at the G8 conference in Europe. In a perfect world there should be no agricultural subsidies, tariff barriers, photo sanitary restrictions and currency manipulation. Unfortunately, we do not live in a perfect world and from the beginning of civilization societies have protected their food supplies. I applaud the President and yourself for aggressively pursuing free and fair trade for our agricultural products. Bring us a WTO agreement that truly levels the playing field. Anything short of true parity between countries will be difficult to support.

Marketing Loan Program- Assuming that the WTO negotiations do not achieve parity, I believe it is critical that U.S. producers maintain the Marketing Loan Program to compete with the restrictions and subsidies in competitor ^{US} ~~and~~ countries.

Cuba- Prior to 1960 U.S. pulse growers supplied nearly all of the dry peas and lentils to Cuba. For over 40 years U.S. pulse growers, processors and exporters were shut out of this market due to a government embargo on trade.

Today, Cuba is the largest importer of dry peas, lentils, chickpeas and dry beans in the western hemisphere. Cuba imports over 200,000 MT of pulses each year, mostly from Canada. It is my hope that by the next farm bill all trade

restrictions with Cuba will be dropped and we will be able to compete without government interference.

MAP & FMD- The Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program have allowed our industry to penetrate new markets around the world. This program should be enhanced in the upcoming farm bill.

Gregory A. Johnson
25 27th St. SE
MINOT, ND 58701
(701) 837-4777
E Mail ppi@premierpulses.com