



FLORIDA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

THE VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

June 11, 2024

The Honorable Katherine Tai
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, Northwest
Washington, DC 20508

Ambassador Tai:

The Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF) is a grassroots organization representing over 132,000 member-families. We are the largest, general agricultural membership organization in the state, representing farmers and ranchers of over 300 various commodities. We appreciate the opportunity to express our concern regarding the recently announced widening trade deficit projections for fiscal year 2024.

According to the quarterly *USDA Economic Research Service's May 2024 Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade report*, the agricultural trade deficit is projected to increase once again to over \$32 billion for fiscal year 2024, an increase of \$1.5 billion from the February projection. This is gravely concerning to us over at Florida Farm Bureau who hold the strong belief that food security is national security and these numbers do not portray our industry in the best light on a global stage.

As the leader of the state's largest general agriculture organization, I encourage you and this administration to hear and reinforce Florida agriculture's trade concerns with our international competitors. The following points may be useful in communicating a message of concern when discussing the detrimental impact of this widening trade deficit.

- FFBF supports free and fair trade.
- We favor federal funding for export promotion programs.
- We strongly oppose any state, federal or international programs that will encourage foreign agricultural enterprises to compete directly against our domestic farmers.
- We support the implementation and enforcement of a timely, durable and effective trade remedy to protect the producers of domestically grown, seasonal and perishable agricultural commodities from unfair trade practices.
- We support consistent enforcement of all current and future trade agreements of the United States to include improved and/or additional enforcement mechanisms.
- We should not sacrifice our domestic producers to gain export markets for certain commodities.

Indisputably, Florida is a major player in global agricultural trade, and therefore, much is at stake for our producers and Florida's economy. Agriculture is the state's second largest economic engine, offering \$120 billion in economic activity and supporting nearly two million jobs.

Florida Farm Bureau has been consistently clear as we have addressed our trade concerns through the years. I want to thank you for the work you do as the principal trade adviser for the United States and would welcome further conversation with you regarding this critically important matter. I look forward to our continued work toward the protection and preservation of our iconic industry.

Most Respectfully,



Jeb S. Smith

Jeb S. Smith
President
Florida Farm Bureau Federation



FLORIDA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

THE VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

June 11, 2024

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Office of the Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, Southwest
Washington, DC 20250

Secretary Vilsack:

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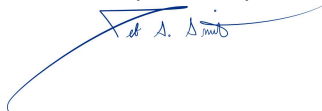
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Most Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeb S. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Jeb S. Smith
President
Florida Farm Bureau Federation