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NFU Weighs in on Trade Negotiations

WASHINGTON (May 10, 2013) – [National Farmers Union](http://www.nfudc.org) (NFU) President Roger Johnson submitted comments today on a possible Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the European Union and sent a letter to the office of the U.S. Trade Representative in advance of the 17th round of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, to be held in Lima, Peru, from May 15 to May 24, 2013.

“NFU takes a broad approach when considering the merits of trade policy,” said Johnson. “Trade has a far-reaching effect on the structure and quality of countries’ economies; therefore, trade agreement negotiations should not simply be limited to regulating trade-specific issues like domestic support levels, export subsidies and market access. Trade agreements must also address differences in labor standards, environmental standards, health standards, the trade-distorting effect of currency manipulation, and cartelization of markets.”

In regard to the TTIP, the comments note the importance of trade balance, fair compensation for farmers and other workers, and protection from dumping and other unfair trade practices that force farmers off their land.

“The TTIP should establish minimum standards for environmental, food and product safety, and consumer information,” said Johnson. “These important considerations should not be limited, and terms of any agreement should not prohibit countries from enacting measures that protect their citizens’ safety.”

Johnson noted lingering concerns with the secrecy in which the TPP negotiation process has been conducted. He also urged caution in TPP talks, specifically as they relate to dairy policies.

“It is not in the interest of family-owned and -operated dairies to open greater access to a country with a consolidated entity controlling the dairy sector,” said Johnson. “U.S. trade negotiators should not force other countries in the TPP to dismantle supply management programs, especially as efforts are currently underway to implement a similar system in the United States. Dairy should not be part of any TPP agreement if these inconsistencies are left unresolved.”

The TTIP comments and the TPP letter are attached.

National Farmers Union has been working since 1902 to protect and enhance the economic well-being and quality of life for family farmers, ranchers and rural communities through advocating grassroots-driven policy positions adopted by its membership.