

April 3, 2008

The Honorable Susan Schwab  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Schwab:

We are writing to express our appreciation for your efforts in the Doha Round of trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) to oppose demands by the European Union (EU) for enhanced protections for geographical indications (GIs). While we are watching with interest the current push to achieve a breakthrough in those negotiations, and are very hopeful that one will be reached, we remain disturbed to hear that EU negotiators are continuing to press their demands on geographical indications (GIs). Our industries and companies will be severely impacted financially if we would allow the European Union to extend their protection to generic names. Because of the potentially severe consequences of the EU proposals to date, we urge you to continue to stand firm on the issue.

The EU proposals on GIs would seriously threaten global trademark protections and undermine any potential gains in market access for food and agricultural products resulting from the Doha Round. Furthermore, accommodation of EU demands would set a terrible precedent, weakening future market access opening. Without regard for established intellectual property rights, the EU proposes to grant certain European producers exclusive rights to make and market many products using names that U.S. producers have invested enormous resources in developing and protecting. Such a move would cause substantial and immediate injury to U.S. food producers and processors. It would also lead to confusion in the marketplace, reduce the availability of products bearing the protected name and increase prices to consumers. Codex Alimentarius, the international standards-setting organization, has developed standards for many of the generic food products that the EU is now proposing to protect as unique products using GIs.

We believe it is irresponsible at this late stage of the negotiations for the EU to continue to press for a proposal that has received so little scrutiny and for which there is so little support. In fact, the US and other WTO members have successfully fended off these demands as part of the protectionist non-trade concerns agenda being pursued by some in the Doha negotiations. Any shift in US opposition would be even more difficult to reconcile with a less than fully ambitious outcome that is sought by some Member countries. Since there is clearly no basis for consensus on this issue, the EU's demands put the entire process at risk of failure.

Our organizations have been working closely with your staff on this matter throughout the Doha process. We appreciate the strong and unwavering support we have received from USTR and other agencies, and we look forward to continued cooperation. We urge you to reject any effort to trade expanded GI protection for other concessions.

Liberalization of agricultural trade will have little benefit for U.S. food producers and processors if it is replaced by new, if more subtle, trade barriers.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

American Meat Institute  
Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.  
Associated Milk Producers, Inc.  
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.  
Davisco Foods Intl. Inc.  
First District Association  
Foremost Farms USA  
Giuseppe's Finer Foods  
Grocery Manufacturers Association  
Hilmar Cheese Co., Inc.  
International Dairy Foods Association  
Kraft Foods, Inc.  
Land O'Lakes, Inc.  
Leprino Foods Company  
National Milk Producers Federation  
Schreiber Foods Inc.  
Swiss Valley Farms  
Tillamook County Creamery Association  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
Wine Institute

cc: The Honorable Ed Schafer, Secretary of Agriculture  
Ambassador Peter Allgeier  
Joseph Glauber, Chief Economist, USDA