

AFIA in strong support of free trade agreements

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Increasing export opportunities is a top priority for the US feed industry. Therefore the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA) strongly urges action on all pending Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as soon as possible. Recently an accord was reached on the US-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement by the Obama Administration. AFIA urges this agreement to move forward to Congress swiftly, so action can be taken on the FTA this summer.

"Ratifying the agreement will increase American competitiveness while removing barriers to US goods entering the Colombian market. The agreement will create US job opportunities and will expand US exports by over \$1 billion, increasing the GDP by \$2.5 billion," AFIA said in a press.

More FTAs needed

"While we applaud the trade agreement with Colombia, we also urge approval of FTAs with Panama and Korea," explained Joel G. Newman, president and CEO of AFIA.

"The FTAs will improve the economy by creating American jobs and expanding US market share, and support the administration's objective to increase US exports."

Support coalition

AFIA is a member in a coalition of food and agricultural organizations in support of passage of the FTAs.

If the Korea – US FTA is rejected, the US will lose market share to other countries who have implemented their own FTAs with Korea, such as the European Union (EU), whose FTA goes into effect July 1, 2011.

Colombia has implemented agreements with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and plans to implement similar FTAs with Canada and the EU.

Government dawdle

Panama has already ratified from their side the FTA with the US on June 11, 2007, but US government is for unknown reason holding back their approval as well as to other pending FTAs.

"International trade is increasingly important to the agriculture industry and while we recognize the President is committed to the US trade agenda, the country will only remain competitive through additional agreements like these with Colombia, Panama and the Republic of Korea," said Newman.

This is the only way to expand market opportunities and ensure a level playing field within the international market," the AFIA president states.