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NCBA: US, Colombia Reach Trade Deal

— Cattlemen to Benefit from Overdue Passage of US, Colombia Trade Pact

WASHINGTON (April 6, 2011) – Expanding opportunities for U.S. cattlemen and women beyond the borders of the United States is a top priority for the **National Cattlemen's Beef Association** (NCBA). The long-awaited trade agreement with Colombia gained momentum today, April 6, 2011, as President Obama announced an agreement has been reached. The agreement will now be sent to Congress to ratify. NCBA President Bill Donald said with 96 percent of the global population living outside of the United States, it is essential to take aggressive measures to enable trade and expand market access for U.S. agriculture in order to stimulate the economy and, more importantly, feed a growing global population.

“The cattle industry can breathe a sigh of relief today as the Colombia agreement finally gets the long overdue attention it deserves,” said Donald. “This agreement has collected dust for well over four years while our trade competitors proactively sign, seal and deliver trade pacts. Most recently, Canada finalized an agreement with Colombia while we watched from the sidelines.”

The Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) was signed by the U.S. Trade Representative and the Colombian trade minister on Nov. 22, 2006. The provisions regarding U.S. beef in the agreement announced today are identical to the agreement signed more than four years ago. If the agreement is ratified by Congress, Colombia would open its markets to all U.S. beef and beef products and would immediately eliminate the 80 percent tariff on prime and choice cuts. According to Colin Woodall, NCBA vice president of government affairs, the Colombia TPA is one of the best negotiated free trade agreements to-date. Woodall said he is confident the agreement will be ratified.

“We have a new Congress and staunch supporters of free trade on both sides of the aisle who are energized and committed to stabilizing and expanding the U.S. economy. A sure fire way to do that is to get moving on the pending trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea before we officially sign over U.S. market share to our competitors,” said Woodall. “Debate will occur and some will once again try to derail progress on the Colombia trade pact but I am confident this agreement will move through the 112th Congress.”

Donald said the U.S., Colombia agreement represents U.S. agricultural export gains of more than \$815 million per year at full implementation.

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The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) has represented America's cattle producers since 1898, preserving the heritage and strength of the industry through education and public policy. As the largest association of cattle producers, NCBA works to create new markets and increase demand for beef. Efforts are made possible through membership contributions. To join, contact NCBA at 1-866-BEEF-USA or membership@beef.org.