

## TX Cattle Raisers Applaud Colombia FTA; Urge Swift Action on Panama and South Korea

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The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) today applauded the announcement of an agreement reached on the long-awaited trade agreement with Colombia. The agreement will now make its way to Congress for ratification.

"Texas beef producers have waited on the Administration to reach this agreement for four years," said Joe Parker, Jr., rancher and TSCRA president. "It's high time this important agreement make some progress. Expanding this market will allow Texas ranchers to provide more consumers with the safe and healthy beef they crave. It will bolster the U.S. economy and create millions of much-needed jobs here at home."

According to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the U.S.-Colombia agreement, when fully implemented, would represent U.S. export gains of more than \$815 million per year.

The Colombia Free Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) was signed 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 ratified by Congress, this agreement will eliminate the 80 percent tariff on prime and choice cuts of beef.

"While we are optimistic that Congress will move quickly and ratify this agreement, we must continue to work to reach agreements with South Korea and Panama," Parker said. "Our global competitors continue to negotiate free trade agreements with other markets. If we don't get the ball rolling, U.S. producers will be at a severe disadvantage."