

For Immediate Release

Contact: Dave Warner  
(202) 347-3600, Ext. 207  
warnerd@nppc.org  
Cellular: (202) 641-7559

## **Ag Groups Urge Congress To Pass Trade Deals**

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 18, 2007 – The Agriculture Coalition for Latin American Trade, which includes the National Pork Producers Council and 41 other food and agricultural organizations, today sent a letter to Congress urging passage of the Peru and Colombia Trade Promotion Agreements, which will give U.S. producers reciprocal market access. Most products from Peru and Colombia, as well as Bolivia and Ecuador, won continued duty-free access into the United States when Congress in June overwhelmingly extended the Andean Trade Preference Act. If approved, the Peru and Colombia agreements will generate more 18,000 new jobs due to increased agricultural exports. The letter appears below.

July 18, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

The 42 undersigned food and agricultural organizations are writing with regard to the recent action by the Congress to extend the Andean Trade Preferences Act (ATPA), which provides duty free access into the United States for most products from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. We urge the Congress to expeditiously pass the Colombia and Peru Trade Promotion Agreements so that our members may benefit from duty free treatment of our exports to these nations.

The special tariff benefits extended by the Congress to these four Andean nations have allowed these countries to ship most products duty free to the United States. For Peru, 98 percent of its products exported to the United States were shipped duty free in 2006. For Colombia, 92 percent of its products were shipped duty free; for Bolivia 91 percent; and, for Ecuador 93 percent. The concessions made by Congress will create and maintain jobs in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, helping millions of workers and families in these countries.

The overwhelming level of support in Congress since the ATPA's inception in 1991 underscores that the United States benefits, both economically and politically, from this tariff preference program. The recent vote in the House of Representatives to extend the program was 365 to 59, with every member of the Ways and Means Committee and with the entire House leadership, both Democratic and Republican, voting in support of this duty free program. In the Senate, the bill passed by unanimous consent. Furthermore, and certainly worthy of note, the business and labor communities joined in support of the extension.

We urge Members to consider the additional benefits that would convey, even more visibly and directly, to U.S. farmers, ranchers, workers and businesses by the implementation of the free trade agreements (FTAs) with Colombia and Peru. The value to the United States of the ATPA pales in comparison with the value of these FTAs. The ATPA offers U.S. exporters no reciprocal market access in the beneficiary countries, whereas both FTAs provide important new market access benefits that will stimulate U.S. exports, create U.S. jobs, and strengthen rural economies. Moreover, the Colombia and Peru FTAs go far beyond the DR-CAFTA and other trade agreements in addressing labor and environmental issues. The Colombia and Peru FTAs incorporate the May 10 bipartisan trade agreement which address longstanding congressional concerns regarding labor, the environment, and other issues.

The Peru and Colombia FTAs also go well beyond the DR-CAFTA and other trade agreements in providing immediate benefits to U.S. farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses that will create thousands of new U.S. jobs. Many U.S. food and agricultural products will become eligible for duty free treatment in Colombia and Peru immediately upon entry into force of the FTAs, and virtually all U.S. products will receive duty free treatment over specified phase-in periods. According to the American Farm Bureau the Peru and Colombia Trade Promotion Agreements will increase U.S. farm exports by \$1.39 billion. USDA estimates for every million dollars of agricultural exports 13.4 jobs are created. Therefore, once fully implemented the Peru and Colombia agreements will provide over 18,000 new jobs due to increased agricultural exports.

If the one-way trade flows associated with the ATPA are good for America, the two-way trade flows resulting from implementation of the free trade agreements with Peru and Colombia will be much better. We urge you to expeditiously consider and pass the Peru and Colombia Trade Promotion Agreements.

Sincerely,

American Cotton Shippers Association  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Frozen Food Institute  
American Meat Institute  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Soybean Association  
California Table Grape Commission  
Commodity Markets Council  
Corn Refiners Association  
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States  
Grocery Manufacturers/Food Products Association  
International Dairy Foods Association  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Chicken Council  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Cotton Council

National Cottonseed Products Association  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Potato Council  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Sunflower Association  
National Turkey Federation  
North American Equipment Dealers Association  
North American Export Grain Association  
North American Millers' Association  
Northwest Horticultural Council  
Sweetener Users Association  
The Fertilizer Institute  
U.S. Apple Association  
U.S. Canola Association  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association  
United Egg Association  
United Egg Producers  
USA Dry Peas and Lentil Council  
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council  
USA Rice Federation