



**Review of U.S. Agricultural Sales to Cuba:
Reclaiming what was America's Fastest
Growing Rice Market from Devastation by U.S.
Government Actions**

**Testimony of
Mike Wagner**

**On behalf of
US Rice Producers Association
and
USA Rice Federation**

**Before
The Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives**

March 11, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I am Mike Wagner, a rice farmer from Sumner, Mississippi. I am the current President of the Mississippi Rice Council, and serve on the Board of Directors of the US Rice Producers Association. My testimony today is on behalf of both the US Rice Producers Association and the USA Rice Federation. Together our organizations represent rice producers in all of the major rice producing states of Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, and Texas—as well as rice millers, merchants, exporters and related industries. As a first time witness before the Congress, I am especially honored and humbled to appear before you today.

Thank you for holding this timely hearing to review the state of U.S. agricultural sales to Cuba. It is unfortunate that this once-vibrant market for U.S. agricultural goods is being thwarted by U.S. policies. It is especially frustrating to rice producers and the rice industry that successive Administrations continue to implement policies contrary to Congressional intent to the detriment of rice producers, the U.S. rice industry, and indeed all of U.S. agriculture.

Similarly, it is sad that our antiquated, ineffective policy restricts the rights of American citizens to travel to Cuba. It is the ONLY country in the world that our government prohibits American citizens to visit. After almost 50 years of the United States unilaterally choking off exports and travel to Cuba, one thing is clear: it is a policy that is not only ineffective, but one that also punishes U.S. farmers, and costs U.S. jobs in related businesses.

We applaud the efforts of Chairman Peterson and Congressman Moran to enact legislation to begin to create jobs in the United States by rationalizing agricultural sales to Cuba and to open travel there for all U.S. citizens.

CUBA: AMERICA'S LARGEST NATURAL RICE MARKET

In 1951, Cuba was the destination for 252,878 metric tons of U.S. rice, approximately \$52 million in sales that represented 51% of U.S. rice exports at that time. Rice exports to Cuba during the period between 1951 and 1960 averaged approximately 169,000 metric tons, valued at \$37 million annually and accounted for 25% of all rice exports for the decade.¹ Following the overthrow

¹ A total of 1.7 MMT, based on US Department of Commerce estimates (SEE Attachment A).

of the Batista government in 1959, the unilateral U.S. embargo closed the Cuban market in 1960.

The U.S. rice industry has grown tremendously in the past 40 years. U.S. rice production is projected to increase from last year to approximately 237 million hundredweights (cwts) in 2010, up 17 million cwts from 2009 production. On average, approximately 50% of the U.S. crop moves into export channels. For the 2009 marketing year, USDA projects 99 million cwts in rice exports.

In addition to shutting off exports to Cuba, export embargoes imposed unilaterally by our government represent one of the greatest impediments to the enhanced exports of U.S. rice. For example, the largest market for U.S. rice in the 1950s was Cuba, in the 1970s it was Iran, and in the 1980s it was Iraq. Unfortunately for rice producers and the rice industry, unilateral embargoes imposed by our own government later negatively affected each of these important markets.

Rice farmers have known for decades what the U.S. Department of Agriculture concluded in 1997, that “Of all grains exported by the United States, rice has been particularly hard-hit by trade restrictions.”² The Department went on to note that such unilateral trade restrictions had put more than 13 percent of projected global rice import demand off-limits to U.S. farmers and exporters.

Fortunately, as policymakers have recognized the ineffectiveness of trade embargoes, each of these embargoes has been lifted. Only the embargo against trade with and travel to Cuba remains. It is widely recognized as having been a failure, and it should be ended.

THE 2000 EXPORT ENHANCEMENT ACT REOPENS RICE TRADE WITH CUBA

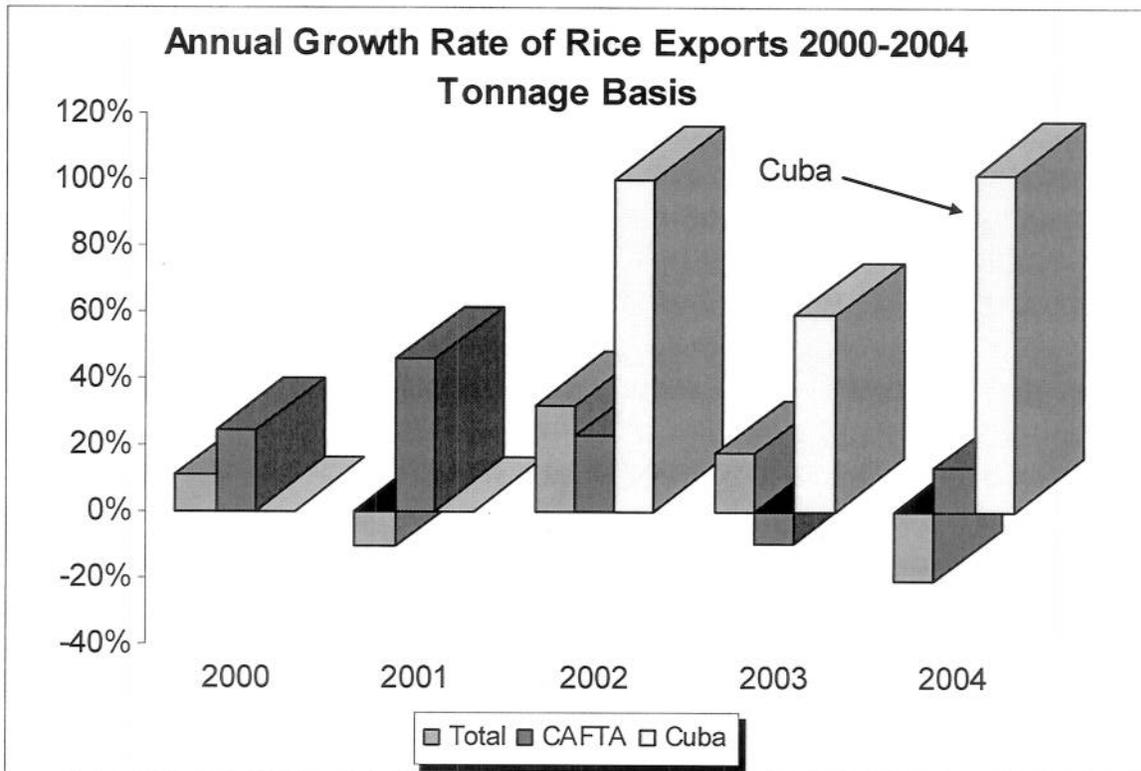
Thanks to the leadership of Senators Byron Dorgan, Richard Lugar, Representative Jo Ann Emerson and many others, Congress provided for the resumption of trade with Cuba when it passed the Trade Sanctions Reform and

² **A Review of U.S. Trade Restrictions and Grain Exports**, Foreign Agriculture Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, http://www.fas.usda.gov/grain/circular/1997/97-09/feature/trd_rstr.htm .

Export Enhancement Act of 2000. The Act sought to achieve its goal of enhancing U.S. agricultural export opportunities by explicitly exempting sales of food and medicine from the exercise of any economic embargo. In order to prevent the extension of credit to Cuba by any U.S. entity, the Act limited the financing terms of sales to Cuba to either—

- (A) Payment of cash in advance; or
- (B) Financing by third country financial institutions (excluding United States persons or Government of Cuba entities), except that such financing may be confirmed or advised by a United States financial institution.

Cuba first made purchases of U.S. agricultural products under the new Export Enhancement Act authorities in December 2001. Between 2001 and early 2005, Cuba contracted to purchase approximately \$1.25 billion worth of U.S. agricultural goods. These purchases included shipments of nearly 320,000 tons of U.S. rice, worth a reported \$81 million. In 2004 the Cubans bought \$64 million worth of U.S. rice – more than their purchases of any other commodity. This established Cuba as our fastest growing market overall, and one of the top five customers for long grain rice.

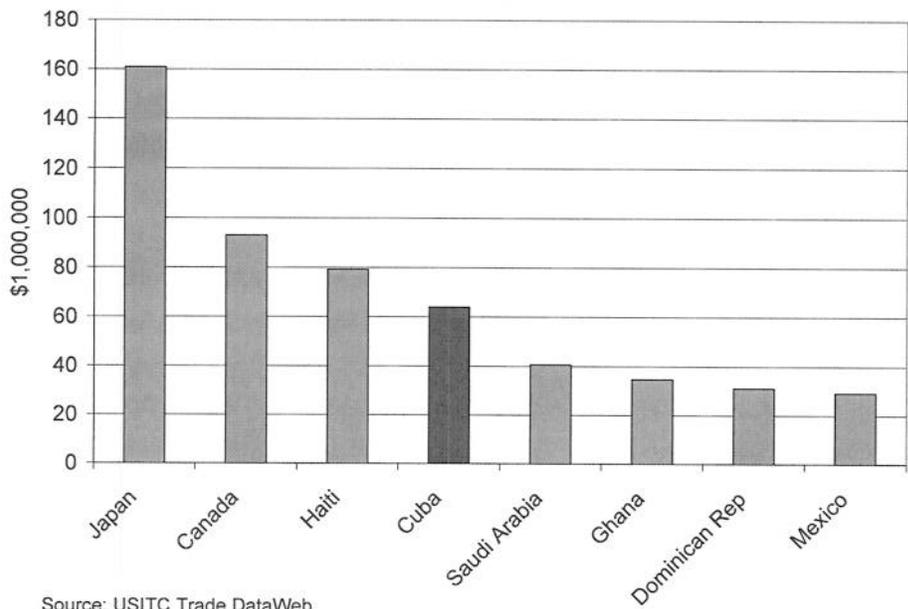


The majority of this trade was conducted on a cash basis, pursuant to licenses issued by the Department of Commerce. Cuban purchasers generally paid promptly, and there was no extension of credit to Cuba by U.S. entities. Clearly, the bipartisan improvements made by Congress in the 2000 Act were working to enhance exports on a cash basis, as Congress had intended.

In 2004 alone, the U.S. exported 177,000 tons of rice to Cuba worth an estimated \$64 million with a total economic impact on local U.S. economies of \$220 million and provided for up to 1,400 jobs.

Cuba has the potential to once again become a top export market for U.S. rice, representing a 400,000 to 600,000 MT export market under normal commercial trade and travel relations.

Largest US Milled Rice Export Markets, 2004



Source: USITC Trade DataWeb

OFAC’s CASH IN ADVANCE “REINTERPRETATION” IMPOSED UNWARRANTED TRADE RESTRICTIONS AND CRIPPLED U.S. EXPORTS

Beginning in November of 2004 the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) began holding up payments to U.S. sellers doing business with Cuba, and began imposing new regulatory reviews and/or licensing

requirements on U.S. sellers and their banks. On February 22, 2005, OFAC issued a Final Rule revising the regulations governing the payment terms permitted for the sale of licensed agricultural products to Cuba (70 Fed. Reg. 9225; the “Final Rule”). The Final Rule was published without any prior notice to Congress or to the exporting community, nor was any opportunity afforded for comment on the Final Rule by the agricultural or exporting communities.

Rice producers and the rice industry were particularly disappointed that in imposing this new restriction on exports to Cuba, OFAC ignored the requirement in section 903 of the 2000 Export Enhancement Act that prohibits the President from imposing any new restriction or condition on commercial export sales of agricultural commodities unless the President submits a report to Congress regarding the restriction 60 days before its imposition, AND the Congress enacts a joint resolution approving the report.³ It is difficult for rice farmers to agree with OFAC that the new “interpretation” was not a restriction or condition on trade when the interpretation rendered invalid \$250 million worth of open agricultural export contracts, and imposed expensive new requirements to finance trades through banks in foreign countries.

³ Section 903(a) of the Export Enhancement Act (22 U.S.C 2207(a)) reads as follows:

“Sec. 903. Restriction.

“(a) New sanctions. Except as provided in sections 7203 and 7204 of this title and notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may not impose a unilateral agricultural sanction or unilateral medical sanction against a foreign country or foreign entity, unless –

“(1) not later than 60 days before the sanction is proposed to be imposed, the President submits a report to Congress that -

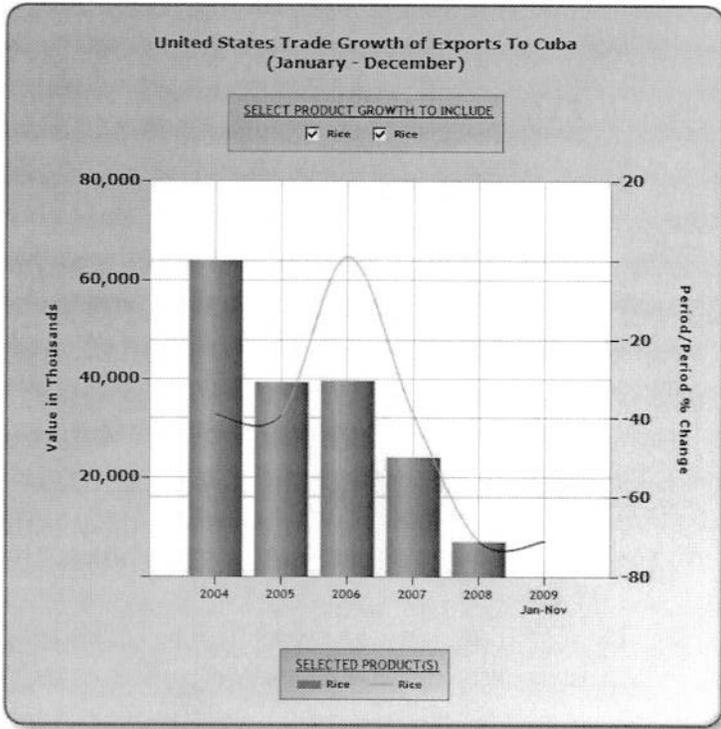
“(A) describes the activity proposed to be prohibited, restricted, or conditioned; and

“(B) describes the actions by the foreign country or foreign entity that justify the sanction; and

“(2) there is enacted into law a joint resolution stating the approval of Congress for the report submitted under paragraph (1).”

Section 902(6) and 902(2)(E) of the Act make clear that the prohibited unilateral agricultural sanctions under section 903(a) include “any prohibition, restriction, or condition on carrying out” “any commercial export sale of agricultural commodities”.

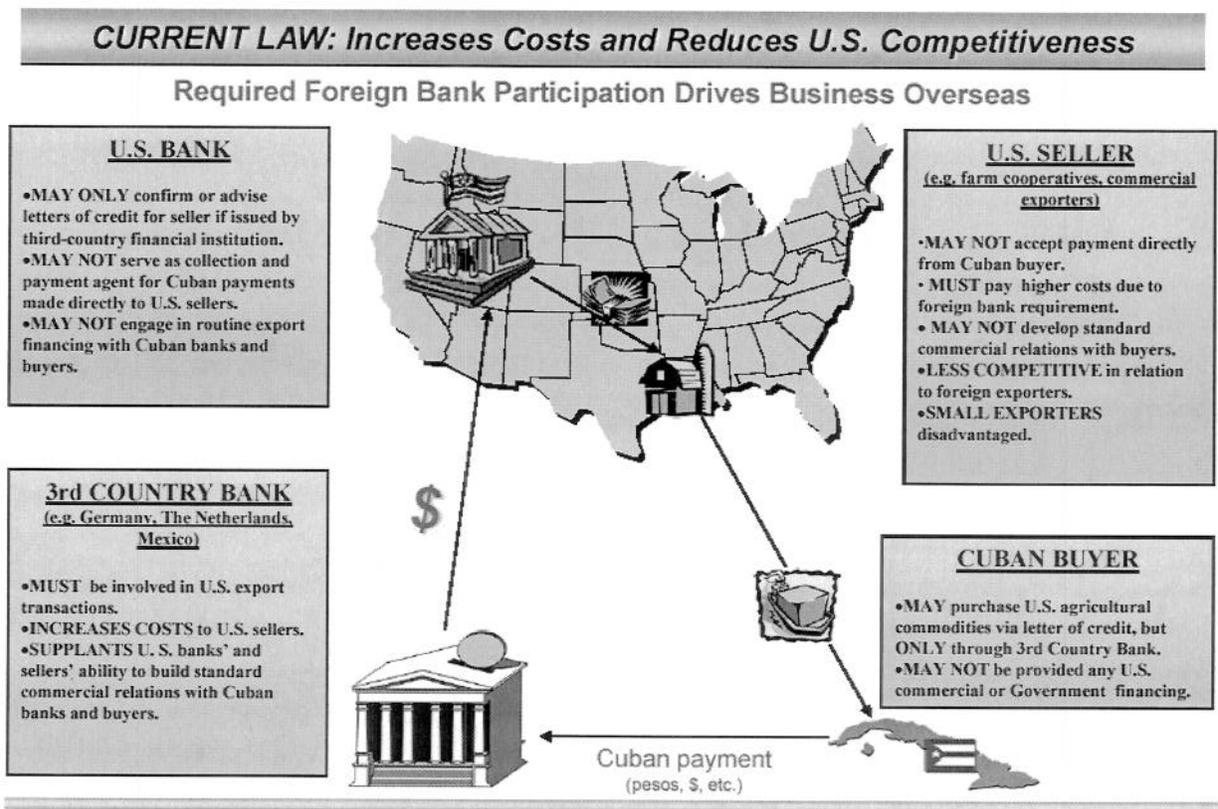
As we predicted at the time of the imposition of the Final Rule, it devastated the market for sales of U.S. rice to Cuba. As the following chart indicates, U.S. rice sales to Cuba plummeted from \$64 million in 2004 to ZERO in 2009.



Why did this happen? The Rule and its heavy-handed imposition sent the clear message to Alimport, the Cuban food importing agency, that the United States could not be trusted as a reliable supplier of food and agriculture products to feed the Cuban people. At the time of the Final Rules' imposition, the Cubans had purchased more than \$1 billion in U.S. food and farm goods. Despite the dire warnings of those opposed to food exports to Cuba, the Cubans paid cash for all of these deliveries, and had done so in a timely manner. As a reward for building this excellent trade relationship, the U.S. government in the Final Rule unilaterally imposed a new interpretation of the "cash in advance" requirement that made illegal the terms of the trade that had been contemplated by Congress and proven by commercial success.

No reasonable buyer can rely on an export seller for critical food supplies knowing that the exporting country's government can (and will) change export policies at a whim. As a result, U.S. agriculture has been relegated to a position as a secondary, residual supplier for rice and many other agricultural goods to Cuba.

Another result of the Rule has been to drive most if not all payments for remaining U.S. agricultural sales to Cuba to be conducted via a letter of credit issued by a third country (non-Cuban) bank. As illustrated in the chart below, this requirement drives up the transaction costs to U.S. sellers and Cuba alike, and reduces the competitiveness of U.S. agricultural products to Cuba. These costs will fall disproportionately on small exporters, many of whom will be run out of the market by the increased costs and complexities of the trade. The costs of these reduced sales will ultimately be borne by U.S. farmers. Effectively the Rule enriches foreign banks at the expense of U.S. farmers, processors, and exporters; and drives the jobs associated with these activities to overseas competitors.



If allowed to remain in place, OFAC's unilateral changes in the terms of these sales threaten opportunities for future sales and brand U.S. agriculture as an unreliable supplier in world agricultural markets.

CONGRESS SHOULD CLARIFY AND REITERATE THE OPERATION OF CASH SALES UNDER THE ENHANCEMENT ACT.

We strongly urge Congress to enact legislation reiterating the intent of Congress that the payment of cash in advance under the 2000 Export Enhancement Act was indeed intended to enhance trade, not to restrict it. This issue is addressed in H.R. 4645, the Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act, which was introduced on February 23, 2010 by Chairman Peterson and co-sponsored by Representatives Jerry Moran, Jo Ann Emerson, RosaDeLauro, and 36 other Members of the House of Representatives. We urge the swift enactment of this legislation to reiterate the intent of Congress that exports financed by the payment of cash in advance be allowed to continue on the same basis that had been successfully used for \$1 billion in exports during 2001 through 2004, before the U.S. rice sales to Cuba were killed off by the OFAC 2005 Final Rule.

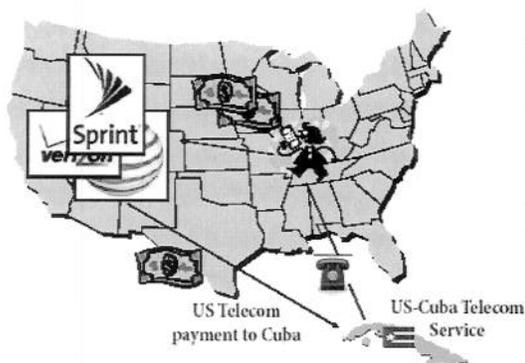
CONGRESS SHOULD BEGIN TO CORRECT THE DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT OF U.S. FARMERS BY AUTHORIZING DIRECT TRANSFERS FROM CUBA TO U.S. FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

As described above, current U.S. law discriminates against American farmers and agricultural exporters. It prohibits Cuba from directly paying U.S. sellers for their purchases. Even safe and secure payments by bank letters of credit are required to be routed through third country banks. This requirement unnecessarily drives up the cost of U.S. exports, discourages U.S. sales, and costs U.S. jobs. There is no offsetting benefit to this policy except to enhance the profits of foreign banks.

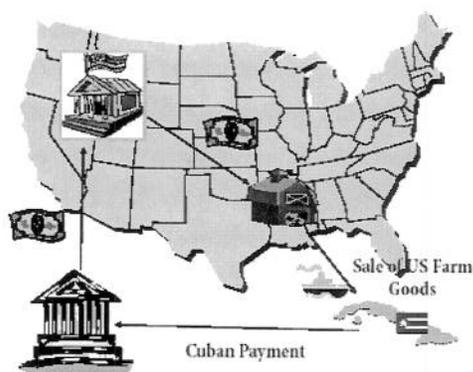
By contrast, U.S. law authorizes telecommunications service providers to make service related payments directly to Cuba. In fact, 8 U.S. companies make payments totaling hundreds of millions of dollars directly to Cuba. According to published reports, these payments totaled \$150 million in 2007 and \$120 million in 2008, and will likely increase since the Obama Administration has broadened the services that U.S. telecom firms may provide to Cuba. The obvious discriminatory disparity between the treatment afforded U.S. farmers and exporters, and multinational telecommunications companies is illustrated by the following comparative flow charts.

STOP DISCRIMINATION AGAINST US FARMERS

Big US Telecom Companies May Pay Cuba Directly



Small US Farmers Must Pay for Foreign Bank Participation



Congress should address this disparity in the treatment of U.S. farmers and multinational telecom providers. Over the past 8 years the Cubans have purchased almost \$4 BILLION in U.S. food and farm goods. While the U.S. and global banking systems nearly collapsed, Cuba has continued to maintain an exemplary record of payments for their U.S. agriculture purchases.

Opponents of agricultural sales to Cuba argue that allowing direct payments by Cuba to U.S. sellers will somehow benefit the Cuban government. But at the same time, some of these opponents SUPPORTED legislation providing for the direct payment of HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT EACH YEAR as compensation for services provided by U.S. telecommunications companies.

If U.S. multinationals can make payments directly TO Cuba, then why should U.S. farmers be disadvantaged? Congress should change the law to allow U.S. farmers and their exporters to be paid directly by Cuba.

Legislation to begin to correct this discrimination is included in the Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act (H.R. 4645). Rice producers and the rice industry strongly support the enactment of this provision to stop the discrimination against U.S. agriculture and to support U.S. employment.

Together, these modest rationalizations of agricultural export terms would significantly enhance U.S. exports. A comprehensive study by the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) during the Bush Administration concluded that the Treasury Department's restrictions on agricultural payment terms had a "substantial negative effect on the sales of agricultural products to Cuba." The

ITC also found that removing these restrictions would increase annual U.S. agricultural sales to Cuba by more than \$300 million.⁴

In the case of rice, the ITC concluded that the lifting of these unnecessary restrictions could increase U.S. rice exports to the island by \$43 million per year. As of 2006, U.S. rice enjoyed a 77 percent share of Cuban imports, for sales valued at \$40 million. The restrictive policies of the United States have driven those exports to zero. The enactment of H.R. 4645 could reverse this trend and give U.S. rice producers, processors, exporters and those whom they employ a fighting chance to regain this key market.

CONGRESS SHOULD OPEN TRAVEL FOR ALL U.S. CITIZENS TO CUBA: A MUTUAL BENEFIT FOR BOTH U.S. AND CUBAN CITIZENS

The rice industry also strongly supports the freedom of U.S. citizens to travel to and from Cuba. We continue to be disappointed that our government continues to restrict the freedom of Americans to travel to and engage with the people of only one country on earth: Cuba. These restrictions also frustrate the intent of the Export Enhancement Act of 2000 by imposing ever-changing bureaucratic red tape requirements for travel to Cuba to facilitate new agriculture sales. This policy is widely acknowledged to be a failure, and should be relaxed to allow U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba.

Specifically, we support the reform of these burdensome and costly travel restrictions as provided for in H.R. 4645. We also support H.R. 874, the “Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act,” introduced by Congressman William Delahunt, and currently cosponsored by 178 other Members of the House.

The legislation would lift all restrictions on U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba, and will have a direct impact on U.S. agricultural sales. Increased travel to Cuba will boost food demand in the country and provide the funds to purchase U.S. commodities. U.S. producers and the agriculture industry would expect to meet the increased food needs.

The U.S. International Trade Commission concluded that if restrictions on travel of U.S. citizens to Cuba were lifted, gains in exports valued in the millions of dollars per year would be made in exports of U.S. processed foods, poultry, beef and pork, and fish.

⁴ “U.S. Agricultural Sales to Cuba; Certain Economic Effects of U.S. Restrictions”; Investigation No. 332-489; USITC Publication 3932; July 2007

In addition, lifting the travel ban will reflect the desires of the American people. Public opinion polls show that about 64 percent of Americans⁵ and two-thirds of Cuban-Americans⁶ support the freedom of U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba.

We strongly support the enactment of this provision and H.R. 4645 in its entirety, and urge each of the Committee's Members to cosponsor and support the enactment of this important legislation.

CONGRESS SHOULD INSIST ON STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 903 OF THE 2000 EXPORT ENHANCEMENT ACT.

Congress should insist that OFAC, and Administrations both now and in the future respect the requirement in section 903 of the 2000 Export Enhancement Act that prohibits the imposition of new trade restrictions or conditions absent the prior notice to, and approval by, Congress. Rice producers are very concerned that absent this vigilant protection of Congress' rights, there will be nothing to stop the total shut down of exports to Cuba by future unwarranted "interpretations" of the Act by overzealous or politically driven Administrations.

THE PRESIDENT SHOULD REASSURE U.S. AGRICULTURE AND OUR CUBAN CUSTOMERS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT "GO BACKWARDS" ON AGRICULTURAL SALES TO CUBA

The damage done since 2005 to our reputation as a reliable supplier of agriculture and food products to Cuba can be repaired over time. But until the Cubans are convinced that our government will not unilaterally void contracts or otherwise restrict trade, we will continue to be relegated to a residual supplier to the Cuban market.

There is one thing that the Administration could do immediately to repair U.S. agriculture's reputation as a reliable supplier and to reassure Cuban and other buyers. This would not cost any money, nor does it involve changing the embargo in any way.

⁵ According to the CNN/Opinion Research Corp. poll conducted April 3-5, 2009, 64 percent of the 1,023 Americans surveyed by telephone thought the U.S. government should allow citizens to travel to Cuba. And 71 percent of those polled said that the U.S. should reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

⁶ According to the 2009 Bendixen & Associates poll, Two-thirds of Cuban and Cuban American adults - 67 percent - support the lifting of travel restrictions for all Americans so that they can also travel to Cuba freely.

To accomplish this, the President should simply state publicly that the United States Government will not impose new restrictions on sales of food and agriculture products to Cuba. That progress made in opening and servicing these markets will not be opposed or destroyed by government intervention. Such a statement, and its faithful implementation by the Administration, could go a long way to reassuring U.S. producers and exporters, and Cuba, that the United States government will not prevent U.S. agriculture from reliably supplying the Cuban market.

CONCLUSION: A NO-COST, ONE-WAY TRADE OPPORTUNITY THAT BENEFITS U.S. FARMERS, WORKERS, AND THE PUBLIC

Rice producers and the rice industry have paid a high price for our government's failed policy toward Cuba. First in 1960, and again in 2005, Democratic and Republican Administration's alike have driven exports to one of our largest rice markets from robust levels to literally nothing.

The U.S. rice industry in the Mississippi Delta and along the Gulf Coast has a tremendous transportation advantage over their Asian competitors in reaching the Cuban rice market. In the 1950's and again between 2001 and 2005, U.S. rice farmers and millers had built sales to the Cuban rice market with high-quality rice that Cuban consumers prefer over Asian rice. Unfortunately, actions by our own government effectively killed that market. The Cuban demand for food imports is largely being met by a number of U.S. agriculture's key competitors in the global market such as Canada, Brazil, and Vietnam. And this is the result almost entirely of actions by our own government.

U.S. rice farmers have been told that export markets are our markets of the future. We agree with much of what President Obama said in his State of the Union speech last month about the need to increase our exports:

"We need to export more of our goods. Because the more products we make and sell to other countries, the more jobs we support right here in America. So tonight, we set a new goal: We will double our exports over the next five years, an increase that will support two million jobs in America. To help meet this goal, we're launching a National Export Initiative that will help farmers and small businesses increase their exports, and reform export controls consistent with national security.

We have to seek new markets aggressively, just as our competitors are. If America sits on the sidelines while other nations sign trade deals, we will lose the chance to create jobs on our shores. But realizing those benefits also means enforcing those agreements so our trading partners play by the rules. And that's why we'll continue to shape a Doha trade agreement that opens global markets, and why we will strengthen our trade relations in Asia and with key partners like South Korea and Panama and Colombia.”

Rice farmers and the entire rice industry support these goals to increase exports and support U.S. jobs. Unfortunately, with respect to Cuba, our government’s policy ignores all of the President’s wise advice. U.S. government policy *reduces* U.S. employment by choking off trade with Cuba. That policy continues to *decrease* U.S. exports, and cedes this important market to our global competitors. Rather than aggressively contending for the Cuban market, our government does indeed sit on the sidelines, while blocking our own team from taking the field.

When these markets are closed off, everyone in the industry is hurt, and farmers predictably pay the ultimate costs of lost markets from their own pockets. These are unnecessary costs that rice farmers should not be asked to pay, especially when pending budget proposals would reduce the farm safety net on which farmers depend here at home.

All we are asking is that the law governing food sales to Cuba be allowed to operate as Congress intended; that the discriminatory treatment of U.S. farmers in regard to these sales be corrected; and that American citizens be allowed to travel to Cuba and take the engagement of our values and economic activity with them—as they can often do in every other country on earth.

We strongly support the enactment of the H.R. 4645 Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act. This legislation represents a modest, sensible first step to fulfilling the intent of the Export Enhancement Act of 2000 and the promise brought by the engagement of the U.S. people with those we seek to feed in Cuba.

I look forward to addressing any questions that you may have.

Thank you.

Attachment A
Cuba's Share of Total U.S. Rice Exports, by volume and value, 1951-61*

Table 9. Cuba's share of total U.S. rice exports, by volume and value, 1951-61

| Year | U.S. exports | | Cuban imports from U.S. | | Cuba's share ^a | |
|------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|-------|
| | Quant. | Value | Quant. | Value | Quant. | Value |
| | Metric tn | million \$'s | metric tn | million \$'s | -----%----- | |
| 1951 | 493,498 | 94 | 252,878 | 52 | 51.2 | 55.3 |
| 1952 | 800,402 | 157 | 219,282 | 50 | 27.4 | 31.8 |
| 1953 | 707,332 | 154 | 253,786 | 50 | 35.9 | 32.5 |
| 1954 | 568,862 | 107 | 162,532 | 38 | 28.6 | 35.5 |
| 1955 | 454,454 | 81 | 96,702 | 21 | 21.3 | 25.9 |
| 1956 | 824,010 | 132 | 144,826 | 27 | 17.6 | 20.4 |
| 1957 | 740,928 | 124 | 187,048 | 40 | 25.2 | 32.3 |
| 1958 | 573,856 | 97 | 187,048 | 40 | 32.6 | 41.2 |
| 1959 | 690,080 | 105 | 171,612 | 36 | 24.9 | 34.2 |
| 1960 | 893,472 | 130 | 15,890 | 17 | 1.8 | 13.1 |
| 1961 | 806,758 | 106 | b | b | b | b |

^a Calculated by the authors.

^b Minimal amounts before the economic embargo was totally enforced.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce (various issues).

* Alvarez, J. and W. A Messina, Jr., Cuba's Rice Industry: Potential Imports From Florida, International Working Paper 92-27, Food and Resource Economics Department, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, September 1992.

Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Required Witness Disclosure Form

House Rules* require nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of federal grants received since October 1, 2007.

Name: Mike Wagner
Address: P.O. Box 456 Sumner, MS 38957
Telephone: (662) 458-0009
Organization you represent (if any): US Rice Producers Association

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2007, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract. House Rules do NOT require disclosure of federal payments to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicare benefits, farm program payments, or assistance to agricultural producers:

Source: _____ Amount: _____

Source: _____ Amount: _____

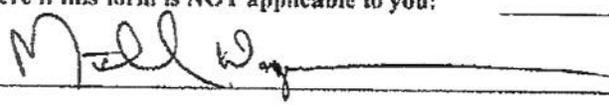
2. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) the organization has received since October 1, 2007, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:

Source: Market Access Program Amount: \$2,256,143

Source: Quality Samples Program Amount: \$75,000

Emerging Markets Program \$65,278

Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you: _____

Signature: 

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(4) of the U.S. House of Representatives provides: *Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof. In the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by any entity represented by the witness.*

PLEASE ATTACH DISCLOSURE FORM TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.

Curriculum Vitae

Mike Wagner Twobrooks Farm

P.O. Box 456
Sumner, MS 38957

Biography

I am the owner and operator of Twobrooks Farm, a family farming enterprise in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi, in the heart of the Mississippi Delta that produces mainly rice, but also soybeans, wheat, and is the winter home of a vast number and assortment of waterfowl. I am a seventh generation farmer and have been walking rice, cotton, and soybean fields all my life. I grew up on a rice, soybean, cattle, timber and cotton farm in the Missouri Bootheel and moved to the Mississippi Delta in 1986 after college graduation. I started my operation from scratch in 1988, at first renting, and then buying farmland and improving it with several goals in mind: I wanted to generate the maximum number of calories for people I am charged with feeding at the least cost to myself and to our ecological system while using the fewest resources possible. The farm annually produces enough calories to feed roughly twenty five million people for one day, while having one of the lowest irrigation requirements and water run-off rates of any rice farm in the U.S. It is through sound management, resource stewardship and conservation that I will transfer this farm to the next generation in better shape than I found it.

Education

1985 Bachelor of Science in Agronomy, University of Missouri-Columbia

Industry and Advisory Boards

Currently serve on U.S. Rice Producers Association's Board of Directors

Currently serve on U.S. Rice Producers Association's International Marketing Committee

Currently serve as president of Mississippi Rice Council

Currently serve on Planters Bank and Trust Company Advisory Board

Currently serve on the Emmitt Till Commission of Tallahatchie County

Awards and Distinctions

Recipient of Delta Council Achievement Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Rice Industry

Served on 2 of Congressman Bennie Thompson's Mississippi Trade Missions to Cuba