

September 17, 2008

The Honorable Susan C. Schwab
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Schwab:

As you are well aware, the U.S. agricultural community has been deeply concerned about the status and direction of the Doha Round of WTO agricultural negotiations – especially the intractable resistance of many of our trading partners to providing truly significant export opportunities for U.S. agriculture in exchange for historically large reductions in U.S. domestic support. Developments at the July Ministerial, in particular, the continued intransigence of certain key countries, have only heightened these concerns.

Some of us have been advised that the meeting this week in Geneva is only a “stocktaking.” However, other reports indicate that strenuous efforts are underway to fashion new proposals to resolve key outstanding issues –in particular, the SSM (Special Safeguard Mechanism for developing countries) – or to nail down agreement on proposals advanced during the July Ministerial. Given these circumstances, we believe it is essential that representatives of our organizations have an in-depth discussion of the issues with you and other members of our negotiating team before the U.S. assents, formally or informally, to any such proposals. We would respectfully request that such a meeting be arranged as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Sorghum Producers
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
U.S. Canola Association
US Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice Federation
U.S. Rice Producers Association

cc. USDA Secretary Ed Schafer
USDA Under Secretary Mark Keenum
USDA Chief Economist Joe Glauber
Assistant to the President Daniel Price
Special Assistant to the President Hunter Moorhead

