

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

The undersigned participants in the Food Industry Codex Coalition (FICC)¹ congratulate you on your recent confirmation as Secretary of Agriculture. We write to express our strong support for continued U.S. leadership of and engagement with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex).

We urge that Codex remain a core strategic focus and resource priority for the Department as it champions prosperity and fairness for American agriculture.

By prioritizing Codex, the Department of Agriculture supports the revitalization of rural areas and sustains the millions of American livelihoods connected to our food, beverages, and agricultural exports. Codex's commitments to science-based decision-making, risk assessment, and transparency align with the Administration's goals of promoting fairness, evidence-based policies, and competitiveness. Continuing to support Codex will help level the global playing field for American farmers, ranchers, workers, food producers, manufacturers, transporters, suppliers, retailers, and the millions of other Americans who contribute to our food and agriculture value chains.

More than ever, United States leadership and resolute engagement with Codex are needed to preserve and expand the export opportunities Codex has fostered, ensuring prosperity for American agriculture. In the absence of U.S. engagement, some international stakeholders will use Codex to advance their ideological interests or regional trade agendas, threatening U.S. competitiveness and prosperity.

As you consider your priorities for the U.S. Codex program, we support the following actions:

- **Direct development and implementation of a proactive, assertive U.S. Codex strategy:** To ensure U.S. strategy is both efficient and effective, the U.S. Codex Office, supported by critical interagency input and resources, should be empowered to develop an assertive Codex strategy that prioritizes U.S. objectives, international outreach, and coalition building. The strategy should include consultation with all relevant stakeholders and build on existing U.S. Codex Office-initiated partnerships with organizations like the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), and U.S. regional and bilateral outreach initiatives.
- **Ensure sufficient staff and resources are provided to the U.S. Codex strategy:** Codex remains a stakeholder priority. The U.S. strategy will need to be fully resourced throughout the U.S. government. Most importantly, it is critical that the U.S. Codex Office is sufficiently staffed and resourced. As the office is asked to do more and the strategic significance of Codex continues to grow, it will need to expand to meet growing demands and sufficient departmental resource allocations will be critical to future positive outcomes for U.S. producers.

¹ FICC is composed of U.S. based food and agriculture companies, think tanks and trade associations representing the entire food chain from production to retail. FICC recognizes and supports the critical role Codex serves to protect public health and ensure fair trade practices through the development and adoption of science- and risk-based food safety standards.

- **Encourage robust interagency engagement and support:** Recognizing Codex as a strategic priority across the Cabinet could enhance interagency collaboration and empower expert personnel to contribute more effectively and efficiently to the U.S. Codex strategy.
- **Effectively harness diplomatic networks to support U.S. Codex strategy:** The United States is most effective when its embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions are mobilized on Codex strategic priorities. This starts by leveraging the U.S. Mission in Rome to influence positions on Codex issues at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization or with other countries at bilateral levels.
- **Maintain the autonomy of the U.S. Codex Office:** The U.S. Codex Office has benefited from its 2018 move to the portfolio of the Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs (TFAA). This organizational arrangement enables the Codex Office to manage the dynamics and complexities of a multilateral organization that touches multiple federal agency jurisdictions. It also provides the Office with a stalwart Undersecretary champion, which has proven essential in driving strategic outcomes with foreign counterparts and in elevating the importance of Codex with competing interagency priorities.

Codex will continue to have an increasingly positive impact on rural America as we see expanded demand for U.S. food and agriculture exports. We count on your leadership and appreciate your attention to Codex as a priority for the Department going forward.

A group of FICC participants would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to discuss these issues further. We request that your staff contact Tony Rice (trice@usdec.org) to arrange a meeting. Thank you again for your continued attention to Codex and its impact on the ability of the United States to supply global markets with safe food and agricultural products.

Respectfully,

Almond Alliance
 American Feed Industry Association
 Animal Health Institute
 Calorie Control Council
 Consumer Brands Association
 Corn Refiners Association
 CropLife America
 Edible Oil Producers Association
 Food and Agriculture Export Alliance
 International Association of Color Manufacturers
 International Chewing Gum Association
 International Council of Beverages Associations
 International Dairy Foods Association
 International Food Additives Council
 Juice Products Association
 Meat Institute
 National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

National Cattlemen's Beef Association
 National Confectioners Association
 National Milk Producers Federation
 National Oilseed Processors Association
 National Pork Producers Council
 National Seasoning Manufacturers Association
 National Turkey Federation
 North American Renderers Association
 The Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association of the U.S.
 The Good Food Institute
 U.S. Dairy Export Council
 U.S. Grains Council
 U.S. Meat Export Federation
 U.S. Peanut Federation
 U.S. Soybean Export Council
 USA Rice
 Wine Institute

Cc:
 The Honorable Marco Rubio, Secretary of State