



NATIONAL POTATO COUNCIL
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April 28, 2020

The Honorable Ted McKinney
Undersecretary for Trade
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C 20250

Dear Undersecretary McKinney:

Thank you again for taking time to visit by telephone recently on global issues impacting the potato industry. We sincerely appreciate the time and attention that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and you specifically, have devoted to ensuring a competitive trade environment for American family farmers.

One issue that I mentioned during our call is continuing to grow in potential impact. As global markets remain closed or impaired due to the pandemic, substantial stocks of potatoes and processed potato products continue to build.

We have seen the beginning of irrational surges in imports of these products as foreign interests search for scarce customers. As we push toward reopening the economy, it is extremely likely that these surges will become even more intense. For example, prior to the food service shutdown, exports of European fries to the US in the first two months of the year went from \$9 million in 2019 to \$20 million in 2020. We anticipate this will resume with more intensity once food service begins to restart.

Looking forward, we ask that USDA consider the potential economic harm due to volatile increases in imports as foreign competitors seek to clear out substantial stocks of potatoes and potato products. We note that the European Union is seeing these same issues in potential surges. In response, they have moved beyond the review stage and taken action to reinstate agricultural tariffs on certain products.

We respectfully ask that you review the potential remedies available to counter this threat and be prepared to utilize them as the situation evolves. Left unchecked, these irrational import surges can prolong the impact of an economic and health crisis that has already cost a great deal for rural America.

Again, the U.S. potato industry sincerely appreciates your knowledgeable and committed leadership on global trade. Thank you for your consideration of these issues during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

W. Kam Quarles
Chief Executive Officer
National Potato Council