

FTAs Provide Tremendous Opportunity for Agriculture

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With the conclusion of the Colombia, Peru and Panama Trade Agreement negotiations, American agriculture has an opportunity to increase exports if Congress passes the agreements. If Congress does not approve the three agreements it will be a loss for America's farmers and ranchers.

The administration has signed trade agreements with Colombia and Peru and is expected to sign the Panama agreement by the end of March.

The American Farm Bureau Federation estimates that once the trade agreements are fully implemented, U.S. agriculture could see more than \$1.5 billion in new trade to these markets.

Currently these countries export many of their agricultural products duty-free into the U.S. under terms of the Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act, as well as the Caribbean Basin Initiative. However, while Colombia, Peru and Panama's products come into the U.S. duty-free, our agricultural products destined for these markets face high tariffs.

When the trade agreements are implemented, most U.S. agricultural products will become eligible for duty-free treatment in these countries immediately. Tariffs on some U.S. ag products will be phased out over time.

In addition to phasing out tariffs, the three countries have taken important steps to eliminate overly restrictive sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) barriers to U.S. exports. SPS barriers are put in place by other countries to protect their consumers, animals and plants from the introduction of food-borne health risks, as well as various pests and diseases from the U.S.

The Colombia, Peru and Panama trade agreements provide a tremendous opportunity for America's farmers and ranchers. It's time for Congress to take action and not let these agreements pass by U.S. agriculture.