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**TFAA Under Secretary Lindberg Testimony for House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies**

*March 4, 2026*

Good morning, Chairman Harris, Ranking Member Bishop, and Members of the Subcommittee.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of President Trump, Secretary Rollins, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I am Luke Lindberg, Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs, where I oversee the Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs mission area, including the Foreign Agricultural Service and the U.S. Codex Office.

When President Trump first nominated me for this position, he said, “Luke is going to get us smart trade deals for our farmers.” President Trump’s Make America First trade agenda and USDA’s trade strategy is guided by a clear objective: get America’s agricultural trade deficit back to surplus and bring reciprocity and fairness back to America’s farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers. We are executing this strategy through a targeted approach focused on three pillars: securing better deals, strengthening buyer–seller relationships, and holding our trading partners accountable.

**First - Securing Better Deals**

For over fifty years, America enjoyed an agricultural trade surplus with other countries. It wasn’t until the Biden Administration, after signing zero new trade deals and not holding other countries accountable to prior commitments, that America experienced a sharp pivot towards years of growing U.S. agricultural trade deficits, to the tune of \$50 billion. This further squeezed Biden’s broken farm economy, which also saw 30% higher input costs.

Further, America had historically been treated unfairly by some of our trading partners. The U.S. maintains some of the lowest applied agricultural tariffs in the world, while many of our major trading partners maintain significantly higher tariffs and impose egregious non-tariff barriers that restrict market access. For example, India, the European Union, and the United Kingdom, all apply higher average tariffs on imports than America.

Fortunately, the Trump Administration has restored an America first approach to U.S. agricultural trade. President Trump is the ultimate Dealmaker in Chief, and American farmers have already benefitted directly from his leadership in our trading relationships.

I like to say that exporting is a team sport, and that couldn’t be more true than in this Administration. American farmers and ranchers are blessed to have not just USDA, but the trade negotiators at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and support from our partners at the Department of Treasury, the Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of State, and the rest of the interagency, all prioritizing American agriculture on the world stage.

One year into this Administration, I want to provide a clear report card. Across regions and commodities, we are seeing concrete progress in reversing the U.S. agricultural trade deficit.

In Central America, agreements with El Salvador and Guatemala have removed unnecessary fumigation requirements, streamlined certification, mandated science-based inspection practices, and created new demand for U.S. ethanol, including a 50-million-gallon annual purchase commitment by Guatemala.

In South America, Argentina has committed to opening access for U.S. poultry within one year, simplifying red tape for beef and pork exports, and protecting U.S. exporters' use of certain meat and cheese terms — a critical issue for value-added exporters.

In Asia, progress has been substantial in the form of trade frameworks and reciprocal trade agreements, which we are closely monitoring:

- Japan committed to \$8 billion in U.S. agricultural purchases, including corn, soybeans, ethanol, fertilizer, and sustainable aviation fuel, and agreed to increase imports of U.S. rice by 75 percent under its WTO minimum access tariff rate quota.
- Vietnam has committed to expand access for U.S. meats and specialty cheeses, improve access for U.S. peaches and nectarines, and accept clearer tariff disciplines on U.S. agricultural goods.
- South Korea has committed to streamline biotech approvals, preserve access for U.S. meat and dairy products, and establish a dedicated U.S. desk to resolve horticultural access issues.
- Thailand committed to eliminating tariffs on 99 percent of U.S. goods, made a \$2.6 billion annual purchase commitment for feed grains and distillers grains, and addressed longstanding ethanol and horticultural barriers.
- Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, and the Philippines have taken concrete steps to reduce or eliminate tariffs, recognize U.S. food safety systems, and remove non-tariff barriers that have historically slowed U.S. exports. In Indonesia specifically, recent engagements have focused on improving regulatory transparency.
- Taiwan committed to provide preferential market access for a wide range of U.S. agricultural exports. It also committed to resolve and prevent non-tariff barriers to U.S. agricultural products, including beef, pork, poultry, and processing potatoes, and to preserve current and future U.S. market access for U.S. cheese and meat producers who rely on the use of certain names.

With China, agriculture has remained a stabilizing force in the broader relationship. Commitments on soybeans, sorghum, and other agricultural commodities are being met, with significant purchases of U.S. soybeans following high-level engagement in October. We are continuing to work to ensure agriculture remains a central deliverable in future discussions.

In Europe, we have made measurable progress addressing tariffs, and in the United Kingdom, we secured expanded access for American beef and established a 1.4-billion-liter ethanol tariff-rate quota under the framework agreement — creating substantial new export potential for U.S. producers.

On the U.S.-Mexico-Canada-Agreement Joint Review, we are also working closely with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to ensure the Agreement remains in the interest of American farmers, ranchers, and producers. The Joint Review presents an opportunity for the United States to consider how the USMCA is working and address shortcomings, including for U.S. agriculture.

These are not abstract commitments. They are tariff reductions, purchase commitments, restored market access, and regulatory reforms that are translating into measurable export gains. In just one year, the agricultural trade deficit is now forecasted at \$29 billion. That's an \$8 billion improvement from December 2025 and a \$14.7 billion improvement from fiscal year 2025.

### **Second - Strengthening Buyer–Seller Relationships**

Trade agreements alone do not generate sales. Market access must be converted into commercial relationships.

To ensure that happens, Secretary Rollins and I launched a three-point plan to operationalize new trade opportunities.

First, we established the America First Trade Promotion Program, which provides targeted trade promotion resources in non-traditional and high-growth markets. This complements USDA's longstanding agricultural trade promotion and facilitation programs and enhances trade promotion for exporters pursuing newly opened markets.

Next, we deployed Trade Reciprocity for U.S. Manufacturers and Producers (TRUMP) missions – which complement our existing agribusiness trade missions and place American producers directly in markets where agricultural trade frameworks have been secured.

For example:

- In the United Kingdom, following the framework agreement that established a 1.4-billion-liter ethanol tariff-rate quota and new beef access, Secretary Rollins and I led a TRUMP mission that brought U.S. industry representatives directly to buyers to operationalize those openings.
- Traditional agribusiness trade missions in 2025 generated 2,755 business-to-business meetings and an estimated \$124.8 million in projected sales over the following year.
- Our most recent agribusiness trade mission in February to Indonesia connected U.S. producers with buyers across corn, soy, wheat, cotton, and fresh fruit sectors in one of our fastest-growing markets.
- We hosted the largest ever trade mission last Fall to Mexico with more than 150 U.S. participants, connecting willing buyers and willing sellers, complementing USDA-Marketing and Regulatory Program's work in evaluating the state of New World Screwworm, and working with our interagency partners to secure the greatest win for America under the 1944 U.S.- Mexico Water Treaty, since its inception.

Lastly, we are working to modernize export financing through the GSM-102 Export Credit Guarantee Program. We recently expanded repayment flexibility with a new 18-month option

that aligns with industry practices and improves competitiveness in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

These tools ensure that when we negotiate access, American producers are positioned to capture demand quickly and effectively.

### **And finally, - Holding Partners Accountable**

Reciprocity requires enforcement.

USDA works in close coordination with USTR to monitor compliance and respond rapidly when commitments are not honored. I meet regularly with Ambassador Callahan to align on enforcement priorities and ensure agricultural interests remain central for U.S. trade policy.

FAS maintains nearly 100 overseas offices staffed by trade specialists and market analysts who provide real-time intelligence and serve as a rapid-response team when barriers arise.

We have demonstrated this accountability approach in several instances:

- Resolving Pakistan's soybean import restrictions.
- Pressing Brazil on fair treatment for U.S. ethanol, including with respect to carbon credit treatment.
- Urging Canada to not disadvantage U.S. biofuels, including ethanol, in its policy making.
- Restoring South African market access for popcorn.

We are holding implementers of our programs accountable, too. USDA just announced its intention to utilize \$452 million worth of fiscal year 2025 funds for a Food for Peace agreement to feed the hungry with America's bounty. We are in return asking implementers to purchase 100% American grown commodities, work towards a no "forever aid" model, and institute strict accountability and oversight measures.

Holding partners accountable ensures that negotiated commitments translate into sustained commercial opportunity and prosperity.

### **Conclusion**

The Trump Administration has been hard at work putting farmers first, delivering timely assistance, securing 18 trade deals and frameworks, and working to reduce the inherited and unprecedented U.S. agricultural trade deficit. While the agricultural trade deficit remains a serious concern, addressing it requires disciplined execution across negotiation, promotion, and enforcement.

Under President Trump's leadership and Secretary Rollins' direction, USDA has made great strides. We will continue using every available tool – trade promotion, export financing, food assistance programs, and coordinated interagency enforcement – to expand market access and improve the competitive position of American agriculture.

Thank you for your continued support of USDA. I look forward to your questions.