



News Release

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Mexican Court Ruling Ignores Science

Washington, D.C. – The recent ruling by a district court judge in Los Mochis to continue the ban on U.S. potatoes in most of Mexico ignores science and directly threatens the role of the Mexican plant health regulatory authority, SAGARPA. The ruling contradicts the conclusions of SAGARPA, USDA and third party experts that have reviewed the potential impact of the importation of fresh potatoes from the United States to Mexico.

SAGARPA has completed and published a Pest Risk Assessment that demonstrates that any risk from the entry of U.S. fresh potatoes can be safely mitigated. Similar analysis by a panel of third party experts facilitated by the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) reached a similar conclusion.

The ruling, while of direct relevance to potato trade, could also have a significant impact on trade in a variety of plant and animal products by undermining the regulatory authority of government plant health authorities in Mexico.

The ruling is expected to be appealed by parties with a direct interest in the case, including SAGARPA. The U.S. potato industry is confident that a more thorough review of the facts of this case and the acknowledgement of established phytosanitary trade practices by the judicial system in Mexico will alter the outcome of this decision.

Based on the initial review by our legal team, the ruling will not limit the movement of U.S. potatoes into the 26 km zone along the border. Potato growers in the U.S. have been supplying Mexican consumers in this region with potatoes since Mexico and the U.S. signed a bilateral agreement in 2003. That agreement called for an expansion of access for U.S. potatoes to all of Mexico. Actions taken by SAGARPA in 2013 finally implemented the full scope of this agreement, but challenge to those actions by Mexican potato growers has prevented all Mexican consumers from having access to U.S. potatoes.

The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level.

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