

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 2, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

Thank you for your support of the American cherry industry, which has experienced significant hardship due to unfair trade practices, depressed prices, and a new invasive pest. We write today to request that processed sweet and tart cherries be included as specialty crops eligible for assistance under the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

In the past three years, the volume of dried cherries imported into the United States has doubled each year. As a result, the U.S. tart cherry industry filed an antidumping and countervailing duty case against Turkey. In June 2019, the U.S. International Trade Commission completed the preliminary investigation and determined there is a reasonable indication the domestic tart cherry industry is materially injured by imports of dried tart cherries from Turkey. The U.S. Department of Commerce subsequently issued a preliminary ruling of new tariffs to curtail cheap cherry imports in September 2019. While this case continues to move forward, the American cherry industry needs relief now.

Further negatively impacting the American cherry industry is the emergence of an invasive pest, the Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD). The SWD landed in Michigan three years ago and has significantly increased the cost of production as prices have decreased. Michigan farmers produce 75 percent of the domestic tart cherry crop annually. However, this year it is estimated the SWD ruined over 30 million pounds of Michigan cherries because it could not be controlled and has no natural enemies.

We are proud to say Michigan is the cherry capital of the United States. However, we are deeply concerned about the future of the cherry industry in Michigan and across the country due to the significant hardship caused by harmful trade practices and depressed prices. For these reasons, we strongly believe processed sweet and tart cherries should be eligible for assistance under the MFP and request your support for American farmers.

We ask for your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
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John Moolenaar  
Member of Congress

  
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Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress