

Mexican Tomato Growers Respond to Florida Growers' Escalation of Tomato Dispute

Associations representing almost 100 percent of Mexican tomato growers issued the following statement today in response to the decision by the Florida Tomato Exchange to continue litigating the Tomato Suspension Agreement instead of honoring the agreement hammered out between the Mexican growers and the U.S. Commerce Department a little more than a month ago:

We are surprised by the announcement that the FTE is seeking a continuation of the antidumping investigation that could void the agreement recently reached with the Commerce Department after many months of negotiations. Its announcement of its intent to do so is misleading and mischaracterizes recent events.

The Mexican tomato industry negotiated its agreement with the Commerce Department in good faith and has every intention of abiding with that agreement throughout its term. So long as the agreement is administered in good faith and in accordance with its terms, the Mexican industry has no intention of ever withdrawing. The October 3 letter the Mexican industry filed with the Commerce Department did not signal an intent either to challenge that agreement in court or to renegotiate the agreement. The letter simply corrected the characterization of data and certain unfounded allegations put on the record after the agreement was signed. And the growers have not challenged the agreement in court or asked to renegotiate it, nor have they stated that they plan to walk away from the agreement. The growers have every right to challenge incorrect misleading statements put on the record of the proceeding by other parties. "We intend to abide by this agreement we negotiated with the Trump Administration," said Mr. Guillermo Jimenez, President of AMHPAC, Mexico's largest growers' association.

At the same time, if the FTE insists on continuing the investigation and taking the matter to the ITC, the Mexican industry is ready to do so and confident of prevailing. As Mr. Rosario Beltran of the CAADES





association said: "The data show clearly that U.S. producers are not injured or threatened with injury by imports from Mexico. Rather, our growers have done just what good, private companies should do. We have spent billions of dollars over recent years converting our production to greenhouses and other protected agriculture types of production to bring a fresher, vine-ripe tomato to the U.S. market. U.S. consumers have turned to those tomatoes not because they are cheaper, because they are not, but because they are fresher and tastier and simply a better product."

Unfortunately, as they have for decades, the FTE continues to do whatever it can to distort trade in fresh tomatoes in the United States. Their latest gesture not only unduly extends this legal process but is also a slap in the face to the Commerce Department, which negotiated a very strong agreement under enormous pressure.

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