SWEETENER USERS ASSOCIATION

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Sweetener Users Call on TTIP Negotiators to Address Sugar Market Access Barriers

Say Sugar is "Critical Issue in Fully Maximizing the Benefits of the TTIP"

Washington, DC (December 18, 2013) – In testimony today before the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) Stakeholder Forum in Washington, DC, the Sweetener Users Association (SUA) called on U.S. trade negotiators to recognize the opportunity for trade liberalization in the sugar market as part of the TTIP negotiations.

Testifying on behalf of SUA, Tom Earley, Vice President of Agralytica, stated:

> *"SUA welcomes the prospect of establishing more open sugar and corn sweetener trade between the United States and the European Union.*
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> *"…We strongly support the efforts of the U.S. government to achieve substantial improvements in market access in the TTIP negotiations. Yet for this opportunity to be realized, the TTIP must provide a meaningful and ambitious result on agriculture that will create a new environment of trade liberalization with real commercial benefits that extend well beyond agriculture. Experience gained from previous FTA negotiations illustrates why the agriculture chapter of this new agreement must include sugar and starch-based sweeteners.*
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> *"…Exclusions for products in the United States will trigger exclusions for other products by the EU, undermining opportunities for market access gains. For the TTIP to be a truly landmark agreement, it should cover all goods and eliminate all tariffs, tariff-rate quotas and other market access barriers among TTIP members, even for what have been termed sensitive commodities. In that regard, it must address prohibitive sugar market access barriers, particularly for refined sugar as well as many further processed sugar-containing products."*

Earley also noted that the opening of the U.S. market to European sugar through the TTIP could help to mitigate the negative economic impact of market-distorting changes made to the U.S. sugar program in the 2008 farm bill. Those changes, which included limiting the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's ability to allow additional sugar imports, resulted in tight sugar supplies in the United States and led to record high prices, costing consumers and food manufacturers up to $3.5 billion each year.

In addition, Earley detailed the following objectives that SUA believes are critical components of trade liberalization with the EU:

- Expanded tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) for raw and refined sugar to permit the entry of substantially greater quantities with these TRQs ultimately abolished;
- Deep reductions in the over-quota tariffs on raw and refined sugar imports;
- Extension of duty-free, quota-free access to the same group of least developed countries to which the EU offers such access;
- All sugar products, including sugar-containing products must be subject to negotiation and the final agreement must actually include all such products;
- Limitation of sugar tariff lines for sensitive product treatment; and
- TTIP should lead to commercially significant reductions in both tariff and non-tariff barriers to sugar market access and not new restraints on sugar trade.

To read the full testimony, click here.

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