



**Opening Statement of Chairman Scott Tipton  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy and Trade  
Market Closed: Foreign Trade Barriers Facing Small Agriculture Exporters  
July 26, 2012**

Good morning and thank you for joining us. The hearing will now come to order.

I would like to begin by extending special thanks to each of our agriculture industry witnesses for taking time out of your busy schedules to travel to Washington, D.C. and appear before this Committee.

I'd especially like to recognize Roger Mix, a constituent from Colorado's Third Congressional District. We look forward to everyone's testimony.

Today's issue is very important to small agriculture producers and their key role within the American economy: the challenges posed by foreign non-tariff barriers to agricultural trade.

Approximately 91 percent of farming and ranching operations in the United States are classified as "small" by the United States Department of Agriculture. In comparison to most other industries, agriculture operations depend more heavily on overseas trade for a significant portion of their income.

It has often been said that one of every four acres planted in the United States is planted for export markets. Overall, exports account for up to 30 percent of farm income overall.

Agriculture trade is also important to job creation in the United States – and our economy needs job creators. According to the Department of Agriculture, farm exports support more than one million jobs on and off the farm.

Along with many of my colleagues, I believe that more can be done to take advantage of our nation's apparent comparative advantage in agriculture production by further expanding access to foreign markets.

A common tool used by foreign nations to block access for U.S. agriculture products is the use of non-tariff trade barriers, predominately sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Because nations have the sovereign right to block products that pose a threat to human or animal health, or could contaminate their food systems, they have used these measures in some instances as a means of blocking competition.

The agriculture community, and Congress, have taken notice. I've heard from a number of potato and other commodity growers in my district regarding the harm caused to them by unfair

trade barriers and have personally met with USDA Secretary Edward Avalos to discuss this problem.

The purpose of today's hearing is to examine these issues further and learn how sanitary and phytosanitary measures have been used as trade weapons against American agriculture producers and the resulting economic impact on small businesses.

I now yield to Ranking Member Critz for his opening statement.