



**National Family Farm Coalition**

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September 13, 2003

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## **U.S. FARMERS CALL ON ZOELICK TO REVERSE STANCE ON AGRICULTURE**

Today, the U.S.-based National Family Farm Coalition joined in the call for the U.S. government to respect the priorities of citizens in the U.S. and around the world as they negotiate at the World Trade Organization.

NFFC Executive Director Katherine Ozer stated that “The interests of family farmers and consumers are not being represented by the U.S. government this week in Cancun. The Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Trade Representative are exclusively promoting the interests of corporate agribusiness, which still views low commodity prices and export-dependent farm policy as the best direction for U.S. farmers.”

NFFC joined with Farm Aid and over 30 national organizations in a “Declaration for a New Direction for American Agriculture and Agricultural Trade” released on September 7.

The Declaration called on U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick to “work towards global trade agreements that reflect the basic values of fairness, independence, democracy, and social and economic justice. In the 8 points (see below) directed toward Zoellick, a primary demand was to support trade policies that ensure that family farmers and ranchers around the world receive a fair price for their products. “Even though fair pricing is the missing ingredient in a healthy agricultural and food economy for countries both North and South, the official talks in Cancún continue to ignore this basic element,” Ozer added.

George Naylor, an Iowa corn and soybean farmer and NFFC President stated, “The U.S. subsidy payment system is the government’s way to keep the farm system operating so that corporate agribusiness buys and exports our farm products at ridiculously low prices. Neither the U.S. economy nor family farmers benefit from this system—it’s corporate welfare in disguise.”

Naylor recommends a complete trade policy reversal to cure the problem of low global agricultural prices: “The U.S. must take the lead as major exporter to set a floor under farm prices, create a food security reserve, and help the farmers of the world grow healthy food sustainably instead of encouraging the industrialization of the world’s food system.”

Naylor is part of a delegation representing U.S. family farmers and rural communities at the WTO in Cancun. NFFC delegates met and marched with family farmers and peasants in an international coalition, Via Campesina, at events held immediately preceding the World Trade Organization.

**The demands to the U.S. Trade Representative in the Declaration follow:**

**To Our Trade Representative Robert Zoellick:**

As a world leader, the United States has responsibility to work towards global trade agreements that reflect the basic values of fairness, independence, democracy, and social and economic justice.

Therefore, as our trade representative in the global trade negotiations, we urge that you:

- Support trade policies that ensure that family farmers and ranchers around the world receive a fair price for their products;
- Support trade policies that ensure that the wages and working conditions of farm laborers in every nation meet accepted international standards;
- Support trade policies that prioritize the need for long term social, economic and environmental stability and vitality of rural communities over the desire of agribusiness corporations, many based in the United States, to dominate world food production and processing;
- End the pricing and dumping of agricultural commodities at below the cost of production, thereby preventing the displacement and destruction of farmers and rural communities in the U.S. and around the world;
- Press for public information to be made available in each country regarding the cost of production for each export crop;
- Support trade policies that address the growing problem of world-wide agricultural marketplace concentration that distorts agricultural markets and prices;
- Support trade policies that reduce the need for taxpayer subsidies by increasing the marketplace value of agricultural products, thereby raising the standards of living and contributing to the stability and economic development of rural communities world-wide;
- Support public sector funding for agriculture that enables all countries to pursue domestic goals of greater social equity, rural development, and environmental protection.

*The full text of the Declaration can be viewed at [www.farmaid.org](http://www.farmaid.org)*