From: Hai Pham
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Subject: [US-ASEAN] Food & Agriculture Update: 2016 ASEAN Agricultural Attaché Roundtable Report
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FOOD & AGRICULTURE UPDATE

2016 ASEAN Agricultural Attaché Roundtable Report

Hai Pham | July 13, 2016

Dear members,

On June 30, the Council held a roundtable with the ASEAN Agricultural Attachés in Washington, D.C. We were joined by representatives from eight ASEAN countries. During the meeting, the group had a positive conversation that highlighted various ASEAN initiatives and priorities, discussed the regional trade landscape, and produced key follow up and engagement opportunities.

ASEAN Agricultural Attaché Roundtable Report

1. **ASEAN Initiatives and Priorities**
    - There was a recent dialogue for ASEAN Embassies to thresh out concerns on a seafood import monitoring program (June 2016). The program was put together to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing), working with the Vietnam Embassy. Now waiting to see what the regulations would be and how that affects trade.
    - Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) - the agriculture attachés would benefit from sessions or meetings around these regulations, including information sessions or providing support.
    - International Agriculture Research: CGIAR is re-organizing and some ASEAN countries will have seats and can vote, including Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines.
    - The Vietnam Embassy is highly appreciative of members and the Council for supporting the motion to bring the catfish regulation vote to the House Floor.

2. **Trade Landscape**
    - TPP - there is a robust agriculture component in the TPP agreement. The reduction of tariffs will be important, even with negotiated phase-in periods, in trade and when moving food products around the region. The SPS chapter is a highlight because it will be very beneficial to import and export, due to the high standards provisions and the rapid response mechanism. Regarding the ratification of TPP, we will have to wait and see in the US and the other members.
    - RCEP - the agreement is aimed to finish by the end of this year, possibly into next year. It is not as high standards as the TPP, but very close to it.

- APEC - Vietnam is ready and looking forward to hosting APEC in 2017. The committee hopes that the conversation of food security, which has been fruitful in the past, will continue to be so in 2017. The Vietnam Embassy will hold an event regarding APEC later this year.

3. **Follow up**
   - The new Philippines government is open to new agricultural policy recommendations this year. The Food & Agriculture committee could take this opportunity to lead the charge with input from companies. The Philippines' agriculture sector priorities are available **here**. The Council plans to draft recommendations for the government based off of our current position paper available **here**. If any members have input, please send them to Hai Pham at hpham@usasean.org.
   - The Singapore Committee on the Future Economy (CFE) is tasked with plotting the direction of Singapore's economic development policies in the coming years. One key deliverable is a report that the CFE is producing, building on the Report of the Economic Strategies (ESC) of 2010. This report is due to be released at the end of the year.
   - Council members should continue TPP engagements with both relevant embassies as well as the US government to make sure this agreement is ratified.
   - The ASEAN attachés and governments seek help in learning more about the FSMA regulations and how best to comply. This is an area that members or outside experts may be able to provide support. Please let us know if your company is interested in hosting an event on capacity building on FSMA for the ASEAN Agricultural Attaches.

If you have any questions, please contact Hai Pham at hpham@usasean.org

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