



STATE OF GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Tyler J Harper
COMMISSIONER

July 13th, 2026

The Honorable Jamieson Greer
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Ambassador Greer,

As a strong supporter of Georgia agriculture and the farmers who feed our nation and Georgia's 17th Commissioner of Agriculture, I urge you to prioritize stronger protections for American specialty crop producers during the ongoing review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). For far too long, Mexican imports, often grown in deplorable working conditions, have undercut American farmers when they take their crops to market. Greater protections for American producers are essential for the success of farmers in Georgia and across the country.

Agriculture remains the number one industry in our state, but farmers continue to face significant challenges. According to the [University](#) of Georgia's 2026 Georgia Ag Impact Report, Georgia's 2024 farm gate value exceeded \$18 billion, while food and fiber production and related industries contributed more than \$100 billion to Georgia's economy and supported over 370,000 jobs. Specialty crops such as vegetables, blueberries, pecans, greenhouse products, and nursery crops play a critical role in that success. Georgia's vegetable industry alone generated approximately \$1.33 billion in [farm gate value](#) in 2023, demonstrating the importance of specialty crop production to our state's economy and rural communities. These crops are marketed through programs like [Georgia Grown](#), which helps connect consumers with locally produced food and strengthens local agricultural economies.

Unfortunately, Georgia's specialty crop producers continue to face increasing pressure from rapidly growing imports, particularly from Mexico. Fresh fruit and vegetable imports from Mexico have [increased](#) by more than 550 percent since 2001. These imports frequently enter U.S. markets during peak harvest periods, depressing prices and forcing American growers to compete against producers operating under substantially different labor, environmental, and regulatory standards.

Labor costs represent roughly half of production expenses for many specialty crop operations. Mexican agricultural wages remain significantly lower than those paid by American growers, who consistently rely on the costly H-2A guest worker program to meet labor demands. At the same time, many foreign producers are not subject to the



same environmental, pesticide, food safety, and labor regulations required of U.S. farmers. This creates an uneven playing field that threatens the long-term viability of domestic specialty crop production.

Beyond economic concerns, there are growing national security implications and food safety concerns associated with increasing dependence on foreign food supplies. Mexican cartels are increasingly using shipments of agricultural products to move drugs like fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine into the United States. At the same time, these organizations have reportedly extorted producers, controlled transportation routes, and infiltrated segments of agricultural supply chains. Such criminal activity raises legitimate concerns about the security, transparency, and reliability of food imports entering the United States that must be addressed.

Georgia farmers produce some of the safest, highest-quality food in the world. The Georgia Grown program was established to promote products grown and produced within our state, supporting local farms, agribusinesses, and rural communities. However, Georgia farmers cannot continue to compete if they are forced to operate under stricter regulations and higher labor costs while simultaneously competing against imports produced under substantially different conditions.

As you evaluate comments submitted under USTR Docket ID USTR-2025-0004 and review the operation of the USMCA, I strongly encourage you to consider targeted trade actions that restore competitive balance for American specialty crop producers. Protecting domestic agriculture is not only an economic necessity but also a matter of food security and in turn national security.

Georgia farmers have invested generations of work into building a strong agricultural economy. They deserve a fair opportunity to compete and continue providing American consumers with safe, reliable, domestically grown food. I'm grateful for the Trump Administrations continue commitment to put American Farmers first, and I look forward to our continued work to ensure American producers have a level playing field to compete on.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tyler J Harper
Commissioner of Agriculture