United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 23, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We appreciate your administration's recent initiative to focus on the U.S.-China dialogue regarding agriculture, and we request that you prioritize biotech approvals with President Xi Jinping during his official visit this month. Developing good public policy that promotes innovation and trade will better position our nations to meet critical food security, environmental and rural economic policy objectives.

Last year in Beijing, the U.S. and China established a foundation on which to build a robust, long-term exchange of ideas related to agricultural innovation, including the use of biotechnology in food crops. We were pleased with the creation of the Strategic Agricultural Innovation Dialogue (SAID), which we believe can be an excellent forum for the U.S. and China to advance common agricultural objectives by ensuring an ongoing commitment to transparency, open communication, and science-based regulatory decision-making.

While we applaud the creation of the SAID and appreciate China's efforts in 2014 to approve three delayed biotechnology-derived crops, we are concerned that forward momentum has not continued. It is our understanding that there is a growing queue of biotechnology-derived crops under review within China's Ministry of Agriculture, creating additional regulatory uncertainty, and undermining commitments made last year to bolster science-based agricultural innovation and trade.

To reinvigorate last year's progress, we ask that you seek a commitment from President Xi to move forward with the queue of biotechnology products, including those awaiting final import approvals. In addition, we ask that you reengage President Xi on the value of elevating the agricultural innovation dialogue via the SAID so that our countries can continue to address mutual food security, environmental and rural economic policy challenges.

Sincerely,

Roy Blunt

Dick Durbin

Ann Kirkpatrick

Amy Klobuchar

Jerry Moran

Heidi Heitkamp

John Cornyn

Sherrod Brown

Chuck Grassley

Tommy Baldwin

Pat Roberts

Claire McCaskill

Mike Enzi

Tom Carper

Cory Gardner

Joni K Ernst

Ben Sasse

David A Perdue

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M. Michael Rounds

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Mike Crapo

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John Boozman