

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 4, 2015

Mr. Kevin Shea, Administrator  
USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Administrator Shea:

I write to express support for efforts to open the Chinese market for high quality rice from the United States as quickly as possible.

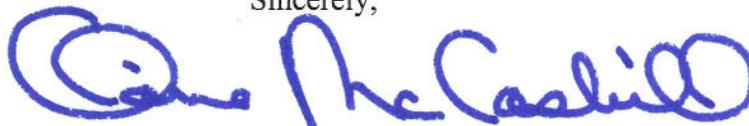
Chinese buyers are importing rice at a record pace and access to the Chinese market would provide relief to U.S. rice producers facing historically low commodity prices. China is the largest food market in the world and an important market for U.S. agriculture products. According to USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, China's food demand continues to outpace its domestic production, creating a market opportunity for exporting countries such as the U.S. While China is the largest rice producer in the world, it is also the largest rice consumer, leading it to increasingly rely on imports.

Over the past several years there has been growing interest from China in purchasing U.S. rice. While price is always an important factor for consumers, so are taste, appearance, quality, safety and nutrition. Numerous supermarket tastings and surveys have demonstrated that U.S. rice will be an accepted option by Chinese consumers if the product is made available.

I appreciate efforts made thus far by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to open rice trade with China, including ongoing negotiations of the phytosanitary protocol, and urge immediate action to finalize the necessary protocol for opening up U.S. rice trade with China. Five years of protocol negotiation has marginalized Missouri rice producers and those processors willing and able to comply with China's current proposed protocol including the fumigation and trapping requirements. Those willing to comply with the phytosanitary standards should no longer be denied access by one of the world's largest markets due to the concerns of those who do not wish to participate in such a protocol. I encourage you to complete the current terms of the protocol so that trade between these willing parties may begin.

I strongly urge APHIS to work quickly to finalize the agreement to establish a protocol governing rice exports from the U.S. to China and in doing so open up an important market for U.S. rice producers and processors.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill  
United States Senator