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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Pete Ricketts, Governor

May 22, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WELLMAN PARTICIPATES IN TRADE MISSION TO CHINA, HIS FIRST AS NDA DIRECTOR

LINCOLN – Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) Director Steve Wellman is currently attending his first international trade mission as NDA director. Wellman is part of a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) trade mission to Southern China, May 21-25, 2018. The trade mission trip, led by USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Ted McKinney, includes government ag leaders and representatives from many agribusiness companies and organizations.

“Southern China is a major import hub and a growing market for U.S. agricultural products,” said NDA Director Wellman. “Like Nebraska-led trade missions, USDA trade missions open doors and deliver results for farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses.”

USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service staff members living in China helped arrange meetings between trade mission delegates and representatives of companies in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Guangdong Province, where Guangzhou and Shenzhen are located, is the largest province in all of China in terms of population, GDP, retail and e-commerce sales.

“Consumers around the world want to know more about their food and Nebraska agriculture,” said Wellman. “This trade mission is an excellent chance to interact with consumers and agribusiness leaders in Southern China, show them the quality ag products that the state has to offer, and learn first-hand about potential opportunities and strategies for boosting Nebraska’s ag exports to that region.”

In 2016, total agricultural exports from Nebraska to China equaled an estimated \$1.43 billion. That includes Nebraska’s top five ag export items to China: soybeans and soybean products; hides and skins; distillers grains; ethanol; and sorghum.

Wellman stressed the importance of growing Nebraska’s ag exports and commodities in China citing recent increases in beef and pork exports to the country.

Less than a year ago in June, 2017, a Nebraska delegation went to Beijing and Shanghai to celebrate the arrival of Nebraska beef into China for the first time in 14 years. In 2017, beef exports from

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Nebraska to China were \$17.5 million, and Nebraska's share of the U.S. beef exports to China was 56.6 percent, according to the USDA Global Agricultural Trade System.

Nebraska pork exports to China are increasing, as well. In 2017, pork exports to China were \$15.7 million, up 24 percent from the previous year.

"The key to export success is building on existing relationships and creating new opportunities in international marketplaces," said Wellman. "Being a part of a U.S. trade mission is beneficial too, as opening world markets and keeping them open depend a lot on trade agreements and protocols negotiated at the federal level."

During this trade mission, the USDA will host several events to promote U.S. agricultural products. During the scheduled business meetings, there will be opportunities for the group to discuss demand and learn more about Chinese inspection procedures and processes.

"I'd like to thank Gov. Ricketts and his administration for continuing to encourage global trade and the opportunities it creates for Nebraska ag producers and agribusiness leaders to sell their products to the world," said Wellman.

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Note to media: Director Wellman will host a conference call on Thursday, May 24, 2018, at 8:30 a.m., CDT, to discuss details of the trade mission. To participate, call 888-820-1398 and enter the passcode 4671261#.

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