



Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20250

January 17, 2025

HIS EXCELLENCY JULIO ANTONIO BERDEGUÉ
Secretary of Agriculture
Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER)
Mexico City, Mexico

Dear Secretary Berdegué:

I write to you today in follow up to our conversation in November, specifically on our shared commitment to put systems in place and reopen trade in cattle quickly and safely. In this, I want to acknowledge the significant and continuous technical collaboration that has occurred between our technical teams in support of this goal since immediately after detection of New World Screwworm (NWS) in Mexico. This work culminated in full technical agreement on the protocol on December 12, 2024, just three weeks after the detection.

I also understand our teams are now working intensely to approve the first pre-export NWS inspection facilities, a key final step in the implementation of the protocol for resuming safe export. I want to assure you I have stressed to my team the priority of approval of these facilities and am pleased to hear the first inspections have accordingly occurred earlier this week. To support in finalizing this work, I urge you to encourage the needed modifications be made expeditiously to the facilities so that my teams can grant full approval as soon as possible. Safe reopening of trade is important to a safe and affordable food supply.

I would also like to express our commitment to stopping the spread of NWS. The emergency funding that I have authorized has allowed us to increase sterile fly production fivefold in the past year and enhance our regional response to NWS by scaling up our dispersal, surveillance, education, and partnerships in the region to address the severity of this threat. Thank you for Mexico's partnership on sterile fly releases, movement controls, and surveillance to limit the spread of the pest in southern Mexico and support our shared goal to push the pest south again to the Darien Gap. In this, I ask for your immediate support in the establishment of the two planned sterile fly dispersal centers in Southern Mexico so we may fortify our current sterile fly dispersal—an effort which has helped to halt further incursion into Mexico for more than 7 weeks. This strategic step is critical to our future successful efforts.

HIS EXCELLENCY JULIO ANTONIO BERDEGUÉ

Page 2

Thank you for your strong partnership which has resulted in our shared progress against this serious pest thus far. I hope you will join me in supporting our teams to complete these remaining key steps as soon as possible to reach a new phase in our fight against NWS while resuming strong trade in Mexican cattle to the United States.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. VILSACK
Secretary

