



**NATIONAL POTATO COUNCIL**  
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February 25, 2019

Mr. Ken Isley  
Administrator  
Foreign Agricultural Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Administrator Isley:

This letter is in response to the December 27, 2018 *Federal Register* notice requesting comments on the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program (Docket number 0551-0038).

The National Potato Council represents the interests of the U.S. potato industry. We have a long-standing relationship with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service and participation in the TASC program.

As you are aware, TASC has been in operation for over fifteen years and was created to address sanitary and phytosanitary issues and technical barriers to trade that prohibit or threaten exports of U.S. specialty crops. The potato industry has utilized the program to address such issues in several countries, including ongoing activities regarding Mexico.

The National Potato Council is interested in seeing the program expanded and improved. We are pleased to see that programs can now be extended beyond five years with a waiver from the Secretary. This is a positive development for long-standing issues. We also look forward to working with USDA to enhance certain processes and streamline reporting requirements to both encourage program participation and maintain strong transparency and oversight of TASC.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding this submission. Thank you for your interest in enhancing this valuable program.

Sincerely,

John Keeling  
Executive Vice President/CEO