



Don J. Cameron  
Board President  
General Manager,  
Terranova Ranch, Inc.

June 24, 2019

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Executive Director

Rachelle Pastor Arizmendi  
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Consortium in  
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College of Agricultural and  
Environmental Sciences  
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Joseph Gallo Farms

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The Libra Foundation

Eric Holst, Senior Director,  
Environmental Defense  
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Jeff Huckaby, President  
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Joy Sterling, CEO  
Iron Horse Vineyards

Andrew J. Thulin, Dean  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environmental  
Sciences, California  
Polytechnic State  
University

Christopher Valadez,  
President, Grower Shipper  
Association of Central  
California

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

On behalf of the California State Board of Food and Agriculture, I want to thank you, Undersecretary Ibach and the APHIS team for working with the tree nut sector to keep the pink bollworm rearing facility in Phoenix, Arizona in operation as we work together to develop a comprehensive, integrated plan and funding to maintain this critical infrastructure.

The rearing facility is an important component of the nation's Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) approach within Integrated Pest Management. The nation's ability to expand existing SIT facilities, or establish new facilities, is extremely limited and closing the Phoenix facility would dismantle a key property and expertise to address current and future invasive pests. Currently, the tree nut industry is facing the threat of the navel orangeworm (NOW) where an SIT approach may be a key element for optimizing biological control efforts to achieve successful eradication.

The NOW is a critical pest in almonds, pistachios and walnuts and is estimated to cause more than \$800 million per year in damage to the total nut harvest at a significant cost to the industry. Research is ongoing, but the potential of SIT for NOW does exist and growers and the State Board of Food and Agriculture are supportive of conducting pilot tests on the approach. The Phoenix facility is key to developing a comprehensive plan to address NOW. By delaying closure of the facility and collaborating with industry and the states on this issue, we have the opportunity to maintain operational infrastructure of a key SIT facility within the nation's integrated pest management portfolio.

Secretary Perdue, USDA APHIS is an indispensable partner for the State's work in addressing invasive plant and animal pests and diseases.



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The implementation of a SIT program (production and distribution) is a resource-intensive process which we cannot do alone. On behalf of the State Board, I look forward to working with USDA, the tree nut, tree fruit and pomegranate industries to develop industry consensus and Congressional support for an effective, long-term program deploying biological controls to eradicate NOW.

Thank you for your attention to this issue and for the continued partnership to eradicate Virulent Newcastle Disease in southern California. We appreciate your ongoing dedication to protecting the nation's agricultural production.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don J. Cameron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "C".

Don J. Cameron  
President

cc: Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture  
Greg Ibach, Undersecretary, USDA Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
Kevin Shea, Administrator, USDA/APHIS