

## **International Trade Creates Foreign Sales**

*Agriculture Commissioner Tommy Irvin*

International trade has been a top priority of my leadership plan for the Georgia Department of Agriculture for most of my tenure. We have focused on opening and expanding markets for Georgia agriculture around the world. Recognizing that foreign trade is necessary for growth, the poultry industry has been at the forefront of these efforts and one of the major benefactors.



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Recently, I have been involved in two international trade projects, which will result in greater foreign sales for poultry and contribute to the stability and growth of Georgia's agriculture economy. Our initiatives have put us ahead and more economically secure than those who followed later.

The results of these two recent events will increase our exports to Taiwan and Cuba. Just last week, I signed a letter of intent with a Taiwan delegation to increase their imports of \$222 million worth of U.S. poultry, pork and beef in 2006 to approximately \$382 million in 2008-2009. The USA Poultry and Egg Export Council participated in

negotiations and signed the letter of intent with us and the representatives of the 2007 Taiwan Agricultural Trade Goodwill Mission – Poultry and Meat Delegation and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Atlanta.

And late last month, representatives of poultry companies from Georgia and other states were among the businesses participating in a trade mission to Cuba. Georgia poultry concerns signed contracts worth just short of a quarter billion dollars on this trip. Previous trade trips to Cuba have been successful for Georgia agriculture companies, including the poultry industry.

Foreign cultures create demands for surplus poultry products in the domestic market. The total value increases with the ability to convert domestic less and non-marketable parts to preferred products in foreign markets.

I will continue to promote expansion of foreign markets for Georgia poultry and other agricultural products. This week, I have sent a letter to the editor of the Atlanta Journal Constitution in support of a columnist's argument for the lifting of the embargo on Cuba.

The embargo serves no purpose. It hurts American farmers and businesses as well as the Cuban people. Georgia farmers and agribusinesses need to be able to deal with their own banks and not third parties in other countries in order to sell their products directly to the Cuban market.

As the poultry industry and other agribusinesses seek innovative technology and research to bring a product to market more efficiently, we should open and expand markets for these agricultural products, not throw up roadblocks.