



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Corn Refiners Laud Senate Finance Committee For Letter Urging Mexico to Drop Barriers to Corn Sweeteners**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The Corn Refiners Association, Inc. (CRA) today applauded Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) and more than half the members of the Senate Finance Committee for their strongly worded letter urging Mexican officials to drop barriers to U.S. farm products – especially U.S. exports of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS).

“We are grateful to Senator Grassley for his continued leadership and efforts to resolve the sweetener dispute,” said Audrae Erickson, president of CRA. “We also applaud the other members of the Senate Finance Committee for signing this letter and making it clear that the U.S. Congress will not sit idly by while Mexico continues to violate the spirit and letter of its international trade obligations. This letter demonstrates that U.S. patience is running out on the sweetener dispute with Mexico.”

The letter states the committee members’ concerns regarding Mexico’s actions “were only heightened following testimony provided to the Finance Committee during a September 23, 2003 hearing on this subject. During the hearing, we heard from a broad swath of U.S. agricultural exporters, including producers of high fructose corn syrup, corn, beef, rice, pork, and apples.”

The letter continues, “While each of these industries is unique, they all share a common complaint – the Government of Mexico appears to be engaging in a systematic practice designed to stop their exports from entering the Mexican market.”

The letter (which can be viewed on-line at <http://finance.senate.gov/press/Gpress/2003/prg100603.pdf>), was sent to Ernest Derbez, Mexico’s foreign minister; Fernando Canales, secretary of the economy; and Javier Bernardo Usabiaga Arroyo, secretary of agriculture. It was signed by the following members of the Senate Finance Committee: Chairman Grassley; Sen. Max Baucus, ranking member; Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT); Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND); Sen. Craig Thomas (R-); Sen. James Jeffords (I-VT); Sen. Rick Santorum (R-PA); Sen. John Kerry (D-MA); Sen. Jim Bunning (R-KY); Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-AR); and Sen. Don Nickles (R-OK).

The corn refining industry is especially affected by Mexico’s actions because U.S. exports of HFCS to Mexico have been shut down for nearly two years due to a discriminatory soda tax implemented by Mexico. No other U.S. agricultural or non-agricultural exporting industry has had its top export market closed for this period of time.

For every 2 million metric tons of HFCS access into Mexico, the U.S. will lose: \$620 million annual HFCS export sales; more than \$300 million annual corn sales; 133 million bushels of bulk corn production; 945.7 thousands acres of corn production; and additional losses to seed, fertilizer and farm machinery industries and related rural investment.