

SWEETENER USERS ASSOCIATION

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Agriculture Policy Expert Questions U.S. Sugar Policy, U.S.-Mexico Suspension Agreements

Washington, DC (August 1, 2016) – Today, Randy Green, an agriculture policy expert and principal at Watson Green LLC, participated in a panel discussion on behalf of the [Sweetener Users Association](#) at the 33rd International Sweetener Symposium in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. During the session on “U.S. Sugar Policy: Is the U.S.-Mexican Sweetener Market Rebalancing?,” Green detailed the sugar-using industry’s perspective on U.S. sugar policy and needed reforms, as well as the impact of the U.S.-Mexico suspension agreements.

On U.S. Sugar Policy, Green said: *“A point that often gets lost in the debate over U.S. sugar policy is that the sugar-using industry values and needs a thriving domestic sugar-producing industry. What we in the sugar-using industry and a bipartisan group of policymakers on Capitol Hill want is reform of the sugar program, which is a relic of the Great Depression that today costs American businesses and consumers an average of \$3 billion a year.*”

“Sugar is one of the only commodities that has gone so long without reform and is so tightly controlled by the federal government – from limits on production to steep import quotas. The question is why, especially when current sugar policy pushes U.S. prices up far above what the rest of the world pays and arbitrarily restricts the availability of sugar for use in the U.S. market.”

In addition to market disruption and the costs to American businesses and consumers, U.S. sugar policy puts an estimated 600,000 jobs in sugar-using industries at unnecessary risk. Between 2009 and 2014, employment in the sugar-using industry declined by more than 13,000 jobs.

On the U.S.-Mexico Suspension Agreements, Green said: *“What the sugar-using industry is most concerned about are the unintended consequences of the suspension agreements – consequences that so far include a shortage of raw sugar for cane refineries and a stark differential in prices between raw and refined sugar. These realities coupled with the possible renegotiation of the suspension agreements are creating additional uncertainty in the U.S. sugar market.”*

Green applauded the ongoing efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to manage the sugar program while balancing the interests of both sugar users and sugar producers.

He presented his views alongside Barbara Fesco, Director of Dairy and Sweeteners Analysis, Farm Service Agency, USDA; Jack Roney, Director of Economics and Policy Analysis, American Sugar Alliance; and panel moderator James Johnson, President, United States Beet Sugar Association.

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