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Contact: [Office of Communications](#), (850) 617-7737

Twitter: [@FDACS](#) & [@NikkiFriedFL](#)

Commissioner Fried Encourages Farmers to Comment, Testify on Unfair Trade Hearings

Tallahassee, Fla. – The **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** (FDACS) and **Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried** are encouraging producers to submit comments in the coming week to the upcoming U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) field hearings on unfair produce trade with Mexico.

The USTR [recently announced](#) that field hearings scheduled in April will now take place on **August 13** and **August 20** in a virtual setting. These hearings will give the U.S. Department of Commerce and Trump Administration an opportunity to hear from Florida's seasonal produce growers on the urgent need for federal action on unfair foreign trade.

Deadlines: The deadline to request to testify at either field hearing is **Monday, July 27**, with the deadline to submit a written copy of advance testimony on **Monday, August 3**. The deadline to submit online comments is also **Monday, August 3**.

“The concerns of Florida’s farmers with the USMCA remains the same as when NAFTA was being renegotiated two years ago – the deal lacks protections against unfair trade practices that have devastated our state’s growers,” said **Commissioner Fried**. “With the U.S. Trade Representative holding the field hearings to which they committed, I’m encouraging Florida’s seasonal produce growers and others affected by unfair foreign trade to make their voices heard. Our farmers are the best in the world and deserve a level playing field on which to compete.”

An [FDACS report released this month](#) shows that imported produce from Mexico has caused serious harm to Florida’s domestic seasonal produce industry, with more than **\$3.7 billion in losses** since 2000. Mexico has expanded their share of the U.S. domestic market by **217 percent** in that time, while Florida’s market share has dropped by 40 percent. Florida agriculture has also suffered more than **37,000 jobs lost** due to unfair foreign trade practices by Mexican importers, while Mexico’s seasonal crop

imports have increased **551 percent** since 2000. Fried highlighted the issue in a [July 2 press conference](#) with **U.S. Representative Stephanie Murphy**.

Additional information on USTR field hearing dates, deadlines, and submission instructions can be found in the [Federal Register](#) notice.