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January 28, 2014

To Whom It May Concern

Re: NatureSweet Tomato Seedlings

I am writing on behalf of Cochise County in support of the importation of tomato plantlets from Mexico for use in NatureSweet's Arizona greenhouses. It is our understanding that the Company purchased the Eurofresh assets through the Bankruptcy Court in April 2013. They are making attempts to stabilize operational expenses and succeed economically. It is further our understanding that success in-part can be achieved through savings if the USDA were to adopt a Rule allowing tomato plantlets to be imported from Mexico. The current single source for use in the United States is from Canada at high costs and plant stress due to the long transportation time to southern Arizona. Cross border trade and employment with Mexico is a major component of our economic base.

Although NatureSweet is located in another adjacent County, it is a major area employer in Cochise County and their acquisition of the Eurofresh greenhouses saved over 1,000 rural Arizona jobs. Those jobs generate payroll dollars which are spent in our communities. We hope that USDA/APHIS will act quickly in completing the remaining RULE making steps and adopt a rule allowing the importation.

Sincerely,

Ann English, Chairman
Cochise County Board of Supervisors