

Chico, CA – Congressman Wally Herger (CA-02); Ambassador Isi Siddiqui, Chief Agricultural Negotiator, U.S. Trade Representative; and Michael Rue, owner of local business Rue and Forsman Ranch issued the following statements after today's trade forum that brought attention to new trade opportunities for Northern California businesses:

Congressman Herger stated: "One of the most overlooked yet important accomplishments this Congress was the strong bipartisan approval of trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. Today, I joined with Ambassador Siddiqui and other officials to help make sure the farmers, ranchers, and business leaders in Northern California know about the opportunities these agreements have created and can take advantage of them.

"As one of our nation's richest agricultural regions, Northern California stands to gain tremendously from the export opportunities created by these agreements. Improved market access can translate to more jobs both on and off the farm in our communities, including transportation workers, processors, packers, sales and marketing workers and other administrative staff. This forum provided a great opportunity for our local businesses to find out how to capitalize on these market-opening agreements. I look forward to seeing Northern California businesses grow and hire more workers as they implement what they learned."

Ambassador Siddiqui said: "As we celebrate World Trade Week this week proclaimed by President Obama, USTR is pleased to be part of the Trade Agreements Forum in Chico, California, organized by Representative Wally Herger.

"Agricultural exports are leading other sectors under President Obama's National Export Initiative. With the implementation of the three recently approved trade agreements with Korea, Colombia and Panama, agricultural exports to those markets are projected to grow by a combined \$2.3 billion annually.

"California agricultural exports, including fresh fruits, juices, vegetables, tree nuts, dairy products and wines, will benefit from the elimination of tariffs under these agreements."

Michael Rue commented: "The International Trade Forum organized and hosted by Congressman Wally Herger was most informative for those looking for information on engaging in export of US, especially California, based products. The chance to hear from and speak directly with US Trade Representative's Chief Agricultural Negotiator Isi Siddiqui as well as representatives of the Dept of Agriculture, Dept of Commerce, Small Business Administration and other agencies that provide resources and support for exports was well received by all who

attended."