



GEAR up for Economic Recovery



At the start of the pandemic, there was some hoarding and empty grocery shelves. What does your office do to ensure food security for Americans?

MARCELLA: The food value chain from the farm to our forks is global. Hoarding can be global. Early in the coronavirus pandemic, we had over 15 governments implementing restrictive export measures to secure domestic food supplies, causing an unnecessary scarcity in some markets and raising the price of food. Our office worked with other U.S. agencies, countries, and international institutions to emphasize a clear message -- export controls lead to food security problems. We have seen countries quickly remove bans, keep trade flowing, get products that Americans want on their grocery shelves, and ensure top-quality U.S. agriculture products find an export market.

Agriculture is a vital part of the U.S. economy. How are you supporting American workers and companies in the agricultural sector?

MARCELLA: Agriculture is an absolute powerhouse for the U.S. economy. In 2018, agriculture and its related industries accounted for 11% of U.S. employment or 22 million jobs. Every day we confront restrictions on U.S. products that interfere with a level playing field that American workers and companies need to compete fairly. The State Department provides the boots on the ground across the world to advocate for science-based regulations to open export markets and uphold international standards on food safety.

How does your work promote global food security?

MARCELLA: By coordinating with other countries and international organizations, our diplomatic efforts on food aid and trade identify impediments in the agricultural supply chains and delivery. We also advocate for countries to follow science-based approaches when developing laws and regulations related to cutting edge approaches to agriculture, such as biotechnology. A great example is drought-tolerant and water-efficient biotech crops crucial for sustainability facing varying regulatory regimes around the world.

