

TPP Means Georgia Grown to more World Markets

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With strong southern roots and a passion for all things homegrown, Georgia is poised to grow economic opportunities that would benefit generations to come. Add in a love for Vidalia onions, BBQ and a little bit of college football and you have an idea of the uniqueness that Georgia's businesses can bring to a world market, especially for our farmers.

Recently, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) has garnered much attention, and rightfully so. Presidential candidates, lawmakers, economists, and the who's who of Washington are weighing in on this trade agreement that still lingers during the last year of President Obama's administration. It's easy to understand how the many benefits of the TPP are getting lost in all this noise, but it remains clear that the TPP will bring a world of opportunities to American entrepreneurs, particularly in our home state.

The reality is that the TPP is a 21st century agreement for a 21st century economy. While the TPP will undoubtedly benefit Georgia's major corporations and the people who work for them, the TPP will have an even greater impact on Georgia's agriculture industry and small businesses -- which would see tremendous growth opportunities with better access to new markets. According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, the TPP could boost U.S. annual net farm income by \$4.4 billion while demolishing over 18,000 tariffs resulting in an increase in trade. This would be a major benefit for Georgia's diverse agricultural products.

Georgia's poultry industry is one of the fastest growing and most diverse business sectors in the State, producing in upwards of 29 million pounds of chicken every day and having an astounding \$25-billion-dollar economic impact on the State's economy every year. That \$25-billion-dollar figure supports over 100,000 good paying jobs for Georgians. With access to new global markets with less burdensome restrictions, like those proposed in TPP, the poultry sector and the agricultural industry will reap the benefits of the creation of even more good paying jobs for hard working Georgians.

Not only would this deal boost the economy and lift tariffs, but it would also open the doors to a new, larger customer base for our businesses. Ninety-five percent of the world's population lives outside the United States, and we will be able to tap into more of this market should Congress approve TPP and President Obama sign it into law. Georgia-grown peaches, cotton, and other agriculture products would have the ability and capacity to reach far and wide and those same small businesses would then be allowed to market their goods in a free and competitive market. As a result, businesses and industries will continue to grow, adding jobs and investments back into our state.

Ultimately, this free trade agreement presents endless opportunities for the state of Georgia. Businesses and industries would be able to spread their home-grown products throughout the global market and receive positive economic benefits in return. For agriculture alone, this agreement brings a new opportunity for farmers to reach a larger portion of our world's population.

Washington has the opportunity to change the tide of recent years and do something that will have a direct benefit on Georgia based businesses. The Trans-Pacific Partnership will grow our economy and will continue to support and create high paying jobs for our citizens. It is up to us as leaders in the state to work together to strongly advocate for TPP and its passage. Together, we can achieve a new wave of economic impact for Georgia while sharing more of our home-grown chicken, Vidalia onions, and other southern goods with consumers all across the world.