



# American Origin Products Association

*Recognizing and protecting origin products of the United States*

*President: Colehour Bondera*

*Executive Director: Jim Smith*

<http://www.aop-us.org>

---

March 20, 2018

The Honorable Andrei Iancu  
Director,  
United States Patent and Trademark Office and  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property  
600 Dulany Street,  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Director Iancu:

On behalf of thousands of American producers of geographically distinctive agricultural products, the American Origin Products Association congratulates you on your confirmation as the Director of the USPTO. We look forward to working with you to preserve, promote, protect America's rich agricultural heritage. As you settle into your new role, we hope that you will come to rely on the American Origin Product Association for data and policy perspectives supporting our mutual goals.

As you know from your time in California, the United States is filled with regional specialty agricultural products and cuisines that together constitute a rich and diverse farming and culinary heritage. As consumers around the world grow more attentive to food origin and more sophisticated and knowledgeable about these products, producers of these localized, heritage-based goods work diligently to promote the high quality and authenticity of their products to consumers.

However, the high consumer demand brings about serious challenges in protecting the identity of these products in a globalized marketplace. Dishonest competitors frequently mimic product names and logos in an effort to pass off their fraudulent copy as the authentic article. This behavior damages the product's regional reputation, disadvantages the veritable producers, and propagates consumer misinformation and confusion, and damages the reputation of the authentic local producers.

The AOPA supports efforts by this administration to level the playing field for American products in international trade. We hope that you will work with us to protect the reputational value of American producers and their locally-named products. Appropriate recognition of these geographic indications can build America's agricultural economy, provide consumers with better information about the products they prefer, and build a stronger employment base in growing rural economies.

Please feel free to use the American Origin Products Association as a resource as you work to promote, preserve and protect America's agricultural economy. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera  
President