

Johanns announces trade trip

The governor will attempt to encourage Taiwanese and Japanese investment in Nebraska agricultural goods.

By JESSICA FARGEN Senior staff writer

Gov. Mike Johanns announced Wednesday that he will lead a trade mission to Taiwan and Japan in April to encourage foreign investment in Nebraska agricultural goods.

"It is designed to advance and investigate possible further increased exports for Nebraska agricultural products," Johanns said.

Allan Wenstrand, economic development director, and Merlyn Carlson, agriculture director, will accompany Johanns on his trip. Representatives from Nebraska's beef, pork, corn and processing industries will also make the trip.

"We're aware that through efforts like this, the necessary friendships and the confidence can be established and provide a foundation for business agreements between industries and provide the needed linkages," Carlson said.

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Republican Rep. Doug Bereuter said he supported Johanns' trip to Taiwan, which is the fifth-largest agricultural market for the United States and the seventh-largest market for U.S. beef, he said.

"Most of Nebraska's exports already flow to Asia and there is a great additional potential market in Asia," he said. "That's where two-thirds of the world's people live. We've had some remarkable success with Taiwan in the last several years."

Taiwan consumes more pork than any other Asian country, he said, and more per capita than the United States. On top of that, Taiwan has lost a lot of hogs to disease.

"I would encourage you, as is your intention, to urge the Taiwanese to buy even more American, especially Nebraska, pork," Bereuter told Johanns during a telephone conference call.

"I think there's ample opportunity in Taiwan for promotion of additional sales of Nebraska beef, soybeans, processed foods and manufactured goods."

Although Japan is having economic problems, it still is Nebraska's largest agricultural export market, Bereuter said.

The congressman said he anticipated the Japanese market would grow dramatically when the country emerges from its current financial problems.

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