

# Trade and Agriculture: A Governor's Perspective

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*Governor John Carlin*

Several years ago, it would have been unusual and perhaps even out of place for a governor to be addressing a group on the topic of international trade. Trade was a federal issue. Governors dealt with matters inside their borders. Interregional, let alone international, perspectives were seldom of concern.

Today, however, we live in a competitive age with an international economy. Those of us in the states are deeply affected by trade decisions made both in Washington and in other world capitals. We can no longer afford to sit by and let those decisions be made without our input or our action. We may not be able to write trade policy, but we can help influence it by participating in the process and by unilaterally taking actions that accomplish something positive for our states.

We have a responsibility to remind federal policymakers that in a federal system the impact of national policies on states must be considered. As states have struggled with difficult economic times and revenue challenges, governors have become more vocal on national economic policy issues. One issue at the top of the list is trade.

We have found from personal experience that there are world markets to be opened and that we can open them. We can introduce other countries to the commodities, products, and services our states provide.

For example, during the past year alone, governors have led a record number of trade missions abroad. We have met with international leaders in our state capitals and we have heard from the Japanese ambassador to the United States, seven Canadian provincial premiers, and the

















