

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY

2800 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73105

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STATE TRADE TEAM RETURNS FROM CUBA

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Oklahoma City—Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture, Terry Peach and several state lawmakers returned from a trade mission to Cuba this week. The delegation came home with news of an upcoming sale of Oklahoma wheat to that Caribbean nation and the reported interest in sales of other commodities.

“We received a verbal commitment that they will purchase 25,000 metric tons of Oklahoma wheat sometime this spring,” Peach said. “They also showed a great deal of interest in purchasing Oklahoma pork. They asked that we send representatives from Oklahoma companies to Cuba in April for a trade show where some sort of agreement could be finalized.”

Chairman of the Oklahoma House of Representatives Agriculture Committee, Dale DeWitt, Vice Chair, Phil Richardson, and Senate Agriculture Committee Vice Chair, Charles Wyrick accompanied Peach. Meeting with Pedro Alvarez, the Chairman of Alimport, the official Cuban importation agency, the group also discussed a possible sale of state dairy cattle to Cuba.

“Our location helps make us an attractive supplier of agricultural products to Cuba,” Peach said. “Their traditional suppliers have been European and South and Central American countries but we can offer lower transportation rates along with high quality products. They are very much aware of this and want to do business with us.

“Mr. Alvarez expressed his concerns about the strict trade and travel restrictions between our countries,” he added. “He said he hopes the restrictions will normalize in the future so we can resume the same relations with Cuba that other agricultural nations enjoy.”

Heavily damaged during the recent hurricane season, demand for timber products is also very high in Cuba, Peach said. Oklahoma timber suppliers could also benefit with improved trade relations.

Keith Kisling, Chairman of the Oklahoma Wheat Commission, Executive Director, Mark Hodges and Mike Mahoney, President and CEO of Wheeler Brothers Grain in Watonga discussed details of the upcoming wheat sale. Kisling said the trade could mean up to \$4 million for Oklahoma wheat producers.

The sale will include wheat from both Wheeler Brothers and W.B. Johnston Grain of Enid.

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