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Intellectual Property Report Details U.S. Trade Representative's Global Initiatives to Defend Rights of Common Food Name Users

Washington, D.C., April 27, 2016 — A report issued by the U.S. Trade Representative's Office today outlined the Administration's broad scope of activities aimed at combating the abuse of geographical indications (GIs) threatening the use of common food names.

USTR's annual Special 301 report touted the extensive efforts in numerous countries and forums that the Administration has undertaken to stem the European Union's efforts to use GIs to erect barriers to U.S. exports.

"Protecting the right to use generic food names is increasingly important to U.S. food and beverage companies," said Jaime Castaneda, executive director of the Consortium for Common Food Names, an international alliance dedicated to preserving rights to use common food names. "Producers around the world continue to grapple with the harmful effects of the EU's overly broad approach to GIs and the impact this policy has already had in numerous markets."

"USTR's robust defense of common food name users – and the rights of buyers to maintain a variety of sources for common food categories – is particularly valuable at this point in time when the EU is seeking to replicate here in the U.S. market its harmful pattern of using its FTAs to impose GI policies aimed at restricting trade and competition," stated Castaneda. "The GI provisions in TPP are a strong step in the right direction toward bringing more transparency and balance to the process of GI evaluations in various countries."

Castaneda said CCFN will continue working with USTR on GIs and called on governments around the world to stop the illegal confiscation of generic names. "We look forward to partnering with USTR to use the tools in TPP, as well as direct engagement with key markets, to preserve access for common food name products," he said. "With the help of USTR and the cooperation of other

governments, we can make real progress toward a more equitable system of considering and approving geographical indications across the globe,” he said.

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The Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN) is an independent, international non-profit alliance whose goal is to work with leaders in agriculture, trade and intellectual property rights to foster the adoption of high standards and model geographical indication guidelines throughout the world. Those interested in joining can find information at www.CommonFoodNames.com.