

Introduction

Welcome to the Forum on Vietnam's Food and Beverage Industry, organized by AmCham and VCCI.

VCCI

We'd like to especially thank VCCI for cooperation on this event. We in AmCham have worked closely with VCCI for many years in a number of sectors.

As many of you may know, VCCI is designated by law and regulation as the representative of all businesses in Vietnam, and all laws, decrees, circulars, etc. relating to business activities must be reviewed by VCCI prior to becoming effective. This was notified to the WTO, and spelled out clearly in the Report of the Working Party on the Accession of Vietnam to the WTO.¹ In this activity, all industry and special business associations are VCCI members and coordinate with VCCI on laws, etc., related to the specific industry or business. We in AmCham are proud to be an Associate Member of VCCI.

AmCham Vietnam Mission, Objectives, and Results

I'd like to share with you a bit about AmCham first, and then the Food & Beverage Committee.

AmCham was established informally in 1994, 20 years ago, and officially licensed in 1998 by the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City under the authority of the DECREE OF THE GOVERNMENT Promulgating the Regulations on the Establishment of Foreign Business Associations in Vietnam, Decree No. 08/1998/ND-CP, dated 22 January 1998.

AmCham's mission is "to help make Vietnam the best destination in Southeast Asia for business and investment." We focus on activities to help improve business conditions, including,

- Organizing meetings between members and Vietnamese State management agencies on commercial, investment and service matters; and
- Proposing recommendations and measures to Vietnamese State management agencies in order to protect the legitimate interests of its member businesses and contribute to the creation of a healthy business environment.

Over the past 15 or 20 years, we have cooperated with business and government leaders in Vietnam to negotiate, conclude, ratify and implement the Vietnam – U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement, the Vietnam – U.S. Bilateral Textile Agreement, Vietnam's Accession to the WTO and U.S. Congressional Approval of "Permanent Normal Trade Relations" (PNTR) with Vietnam. And we are now cooperating to promote understanding and support for the ASEAN Economic Blueprint 2015,² the WTO Bali Package Trade Facilitation Agreement,³ and the TransPacific Partnership Free Trade Agreement.⁴ [Slide 1]

I'd like to share with you two pictures that demonstrate the success of our cooperation with business and government leaders in Vietnam. The first shows trade between Vietnam and the United States from 2001 to 2014, with a projection to 2012. Trade increased from \$1.5 billion in

¹ <http://www.amchamvietnam.com/9247/attachment-b-to-jan-24-2013-letter-to-molisa-re-foreign-workers-work-permits-and-no-less-than-60-days-comment-period/>

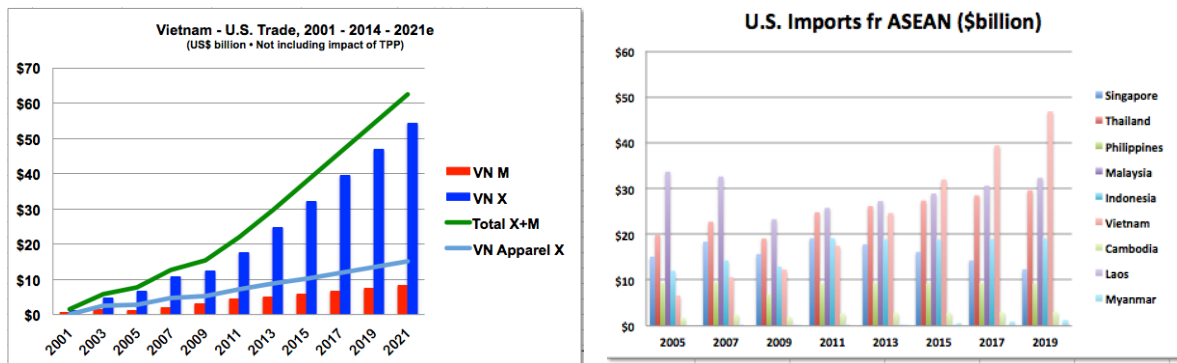
<http://www.amchamvietnam.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/061107-VNM48-Transparency-pp127ff-para509ff.pdf>
<http://www.amchamvietnam.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/061129-Báo-cáo-của-Ban-Công-tác-về-việc-Việt-Nam-gia-nhập-WTO-Transparency-pp-180-184-para-509ff.pdf>

² <http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-10.pdf>

³ http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc9_e/brief_tradfa_e.htm

⁴ <http://www.amchamvietnam.com/30436144/tpp/>

2001 to \$29.7 billion in 2013. We expect it to reach \$62.6 billion by 2021 if present trends continue, and much higher with the impact of TPP and other agreements I mentioned. [Slide 2]



The second picture is to put Vietnam in the context of overall trade in goods between ASEAN and the US. Vietnam has moved up to be in the “top three” ASEAN sources of imports for the U.S. by 2013. And by 2019 should be far head of the others, if present trends continue. Of course, AmCham companies are also involved with Vietnam’s intra-ASEAN and intra-APEC trade in goods and services, as well, but these bilateral statistics give an idea of the success of our cooperation. [Slide 3]

AmCham Food and Beverage Committee Mission, Objectives

Last year AmCham established a Food & Beverage Committee, with the objective to help improve business conditions in the food and beverage industry sector.

Key issues for the committee include Transparency and Regulatory Coherence in Laws/Regulations relating to F&B. And we seek opportunities for consultation with thought leaders and central and local government authorities in Vietnam and in ASEAN on changes and implementation of laws/regulations such as: Food Safety Law, Water Resources Law, Tax Law; Customs Law; Advertising Law, etc.

That is one of the purposes of the Forum today.

Much of our strategic focus is on food and beverage quality, safety, and labeling, and to help maintain understanding, transparency, and regulatory coherence under commitments of the

WTO SPS Agreement⁵ and Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

ASEAN Economic Blueprint 2015⁶

APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum⁷

All of these agreements are to assure that consumers are being supplied with food and beverages that are safe. And that health and safety measures are not being used as an excuse for protecting domestic producers.

In our efforts, we like to consult and cooperate with related associations in Vietnam such as the

⁵ http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/spsagr_e.htm and http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/agrmtseries4_sps_e.pdf

⁶ <http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-10.pdf>, pages 16-18

⁷ <http://fscf-ptin.apec.org> and <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/science/international/apec/Pages/apec-background.aspx#>

Vietnam Food Association, the HCM City Food Association, the Vietnam Beverage Association, the Vietnam Sugar Cane and Sugar Association, etc.

We also cooperate with international groups such as the ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance,⁸ which is a group of national associations in South East Asia involved in the manufacture, distribution and sale of food and beverage products.

Another group we cooperate with is Food Industry Asia,⁹ which is based on Singapore. It was formed to help major food manufacturers to speak with one voice in Asia, principally in response to the region's rapid economic growth and complex challenges in areas such as regulatory standards, food safety, and effective public health approaches.

One activity we are very interested in is to work with Vietnam's food associations and companies on a technical assistance program to help them meet U.S. Food and Drug Administration / U.S. Department of Agriculture testing and certification requirements for F&B products. This will be even more important when the TransPacific Partnership is concluded and goes into effect.

Conclusion

Once again, welcome to the Forum on Vietnam's Food and Beverage Industry, organized by AmCham and VCCI. We look forward to cooperating with you to help make Vietnam the best destination in Southeast Asia for business and investment, in general, and for the food and beverage industry, in particular.

On behalf of all AmCham members

Xin chúc toàn thể quý vị có mặt hôm nay nhiều sức khỏe, hạnh phúc và thành công.
I would like to wish distinguished participants here today good health, happiness and success.

Xin chân thành cảm ơn.
Thank you very much.

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⁸ <http://afba.co>

⁹ <http://foodindustry.asia/home>