APPENDIX F

TEXAS CITRUS MUTUAL,
Weslaco, Tex., May 22, 1968.

Mr. J. S. PETERS,
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association,
Orlando, Fla.

DEAR MR. PETERS: We have received notice from our Congressman E. "Kika" de la Garza of the open hearings starting Tuesday, 4 June, on the balance of trade between the United States and foreign nations including imposition of quotas. Texas Citrus Mutual will be unable to appear at the hearings but understand your organization will submit a request to be heard. If so, we request you represent our organization also.

Texas Citrus Mutual is a non-profit organization of Texas citrus growers, patterned after your Florida Citrus Mutual. We represent some 2000 Texas citrus growers, representing approximately 75% of the Texas citrus production. Our offices are located at 115 North 10th Street in Edinburg, Texas.

The importation of citrus fruit from Mexico is of vital concern to we Texas citrus growers, and it appears from the experience this season that it will loom larger each year as a factor adversely affecting the marketing of domestically produced citrus. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that our cost of production is increasing at a rate far in excess of that faced by producers in Mexico.

Over the past few years specific action has been taken on the national level which has and will continue to increase our cost of production, i.e.,—ending the Bracero Program—minimum wages for farm workers—increasing wages for farm workers, packing house and processing plant workers—increasing costs for supplies and equipment—and increasing taxes at county, state, and national levels necessary to support our higher standards of living.

There is no indication the foreign costs of production will increase at anywhere near our rate while the ending of the Bracero Program resulted in lower wages in Mexico.

Over the years the citrus growers of Texas, as well as the growers of California and Florida, have assessed themselves for the purpose of advertising and promotion of citrus. As a result of these programs the growers have developed a good demand for citrus. Further, these same growers are paying the highest wages paid in any commercial citrus producing area. They are also paying their share of the taxes necessary to support our higher standards of living and other obligations of our government. The United States citrus growers do not receive long term, low interest government loans designed to plant and care for their orchards while they are coming into production as is the case in foreign areas. The American citrus growers DO NOT receive a direct government subsidy on each carton of citrus sold fresh in export as many foreign governments pay to their growers, nor do they receive a subsidy on frozen concentrate or products sold in export.

Foreign governments with their long term loans and subsidy payments have encouraged the planting of citrus, principally oranges, to the point where large surpluses are predicted. These countries are looking to the United States to dispose of their excess production during peak crop years. The maintenance of a sound domestic citrus industry and steady employment of our American workers employed by this important industry should be a national objective.

With the emphasis on balance of payments, it appears this is an area that will drain more dollars each year from the United States. This season, through May 20, Mexico alone has crossed into the United States 2261 carlot equivalents oranges, 428 carlot equivalents tangerines, 6 cars mixed citrus and 19 carlot equivalents limes. These imports represent approximately $9 million that have flowed from the United States into Mexico (USDA–State Market News Service, Weslaco, Texas). There has been in addition citrus entering the United States from other countries not included herein.

During the 1966–67 citrus season the largest shipper of fresh citrus from Texas was the Edinburg Citrus Ass'n. Operating two packing houses they shipped 2133