

In the complicated aftermath of the scrapping of the U.S. and Mexico's Tomato Suspension Agreement and subsequent launch of the antidumping investigation of Mexican tomatoes, there has been an [escalating back-and-forth tirade](#) between involved parties, the latest of which concerns the Florida Tomato Exchange (FTE) claiming that Mexican growers have made false allegations.

According to the FTE, Mexican tomato growers have falsely declared that Florida politicians are pressuring the Commerce Department to “pre-judge” the antidumping investigation of Mexican tomatoes.

It adds that the growers' claims serve as a clear example of “the pot calling the kettle black”. In fact, the FTE says that Mexican growers have not been completely honest with the information they are spreading to the public.

In a press release last week, Mexican growers announced that their recently submitted data to the Commerce Department confirms they are not dumping in the U.S. market.

Yet they failed to mention that the Commerce Department has yet to undertake a thorough review of that data to determine whether it is accurate, according to the FTE.

The review will include an audit of Mexican company books. This way, the Department can assess whether the data submitted is consistent with the requirements of the U.S. antidumping law.

Additionally, the Mexican growers have omitted another pertinent detail, the FTE points out. It says they hadn't mentioned that, despite the fact that the Mexican government is not a party to the antidumping case, Mexican government officials have met with Commerce Department officials ten times on this issue in recent months.

Last week, for example, Mexico's Economy Minister spoke personally with U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Mexico's Under Secretary of Economy spoke with U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce Gilbert Kaplan.

The 2013 Tomato Suspension Agreement was terminated in May after the Commerce Department concluded that it was not working to stop Mexican dumping from injuring American tomato growers.

Its termination allowed for the independent antidumping investigation to finally proceed.

This investigation gives both Mexican and U.S. tomato growers their day in court, without

pre-judging the results, notes the FTE.

There is still a chance that a new suspension agreement will be reached before the anti-dumping investigation is completed, it explains.

Regarding the domestic tomato industry, the FTE emphasizes that its message on this has been consistent - if there is a new agreement, it must eliminate the loopholes in the old agreement and have a more enforceable structure. Anything less than that is unacceptable.

The Mexican growers do not have to accept a new agreement that they don't support. Similarly, no agreement should be implemented if the domestic industry doesn't support it, the exchange comments.

It says that the Mexican growers' PR strategy over the last year has been to make the issue into a Florida vs. Mexico stand-off.

The FTE has continually pointed out the fallacy of this argument, highlighting the widespread grower support across all tomato growing states in the U.S, it comments.

This support was obvious at the International Trade Commission hearing in March, it says. At that time, growers from California, Tennessee, Michigan, Virginia, Georgia, and Florida testified on this matter.

For now, the domestic industry remains open to a new suspension agreement, the FTE points out.

However, it adds that if such an agreement isn't possible, the antidumping investigation should run its full course.