

# *Missouri Ag Director Talks Exploring Trade With Cuba*

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Jefferson, Dec 29, (RHC), -- If things fall into place, Missouri's Agriculture Director could be among the first Americans to enter Cuba since President Obama began easing relations between the two countries.

Governor Jay Nixon (D) wants his Agriculture Department to look for opportunities for Missouri from the normalization of trade with Cuba. Agriculture Director Richard Fordyce says that could include a trade mission including agriculture, business and elected leaders.

"It's very exciting," Fordyce told Missouri.net. "When the governor had mentioned this, he thought that the announcement of the president to normalize diplomatic relations with Cuba was big and thought it could be really important for Missouri agriculture."

Fordyce thinks it is a priority of the Governor that Missouri be the first state to send a trade team to Cuba, with proposals to get Missouri products into Cuba.

"We're working with the United States Department of Agriculture and the U.S. State Department. We'll start seeing what hurdles we need to overcome," said Fordyce.

Fordyce thinks Missouri grown rice would be a top potential export, but also expects interest in oak barrels, pork and livestock feed.

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