

May 14, 2019

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

America's food producers face near-unprecedented economic uncertainty and hardship. While the downturn in the agricultural economy has been several years in the making, it has worsened for some sectors due to the escalation of tariffs in key markets, especially China.

U.S. farmers and ranchers now face a third wave of tariff increases by China in retaliation against the latest increase in U.S. tariffs that went into effect last Friday, May 10. The mere threat sent prices further downward for certain commodities last week.

We appreciate the Trade Aid Package that you authorized in 2018. The aid package helped some farmers and ranchers hold on and gave trade negotiators more time to reach a deal with China. However, time is running out for many in agriculture. I am hearing anecdotal reports of farmers, particularly those who are dealing with planting delays due to weather, deciding not to plant a crop this year because there's just no market for it.

In 2018, U.S. agricultural exports to China declined \$10 billion—about a 50 percent loss. This is a drastic reversal for what had been a growing market. From 2000 through 2017, the value of our agricultural exports to China grew from 2 percent to 16 percent of total U.S. agricultural exports.

The American Farm Bureau Federation supports your efforts to improve trading opportunities for all U.S. industries, including agriculture, and we remain hopeful that the U.S. – China negotiations will come to a successful conclusion soon. We ask that your trade negotiators make a deal as soon as possible to end the tariffs that are slashing our exports, destroying a once-promising market for agriculture, worsening the farm economy, and contributing to high levels of stress and uncertainty for many farm and ranch families and other Americans whose jobs are connected to agricultural production.

Mitigation payments can never replace lost markets, but as long as these trade disruptions continue we ask that your Administration provide assistance so farmers and ranchers can continue to farm. Also, while it is nearly impossible to replace a market as large as China's, we ask that your trade negotiators continue their work to expand markets elsewhere, through the new U.S. – Mexico – Canada Agreement and ongoing discussions with Japan, the European

Union and other countries. America's farmers and ranchers depend on growing and stable export markets. Our agricultural trade surplus previously has been a tremendous success story for the U.S. We hope to return to that success for agriculture and our country.

As always, Mr. President, we stand ready to support and assist in your efforts to strengthen our nation and economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Zippy Duvall".

Zippy Duvall
President

cc: The Honorable Sonny Perdue
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer
U.S. Trade Representative