

# AG TALKS

*A roadmap for trade, supply chains, and the future of American agriculture.*

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# SPONSORS

We would like to extend our utmost thanks and gratitude to our sponsors: Farmers For Free Trade, National Milk Producers Federation, Corn Refiners Association, Iowa Soybean Association, Minnesota AgriGrowth, Plant Based Products Council, National Corn Growers Association, U.S. Dairy Export Council, National Association of Wheatgrowers, American Farm Bureau Federation, Fresh Produce Association of the Americas, North American Meat Institute, KCOE Isom and World Strategies. Your support and participation was instrumental in allowing us to have these excellent conversations and work to propel American agriculture into the future.

We would also like to thank the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture including Barb Glenn, CEO who moderated the Minnesota roundtable as well as participated; Jamie Zmitko, Deputy Division Director of Agriculture Development at the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; Julie Kenney, Deputy Secretary, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Thom Peterson, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, all of whom sat front row at our talks. We would also like to thank Russell Redding, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and Randy Romanski, Secretary-Designee, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture who both served as panelists for our talks.



Additionally, we would like to thank all of our sponsors at the local level. Without your generous support, these meaningful conversations would not have been able to take place.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The American agriculture industry has traditionally served as a trusted provider of high-quality food to the world's consumers. Each year, the U.S. has run significant agricultural trade surpluses. Today, however, American food and agriculture faces notable challenges which affect its short-term viability and its long-term sustainability.

In recent years, American agriculture has been sidelined while its competitors have actively pursued strategic trade agreements with our largest markets. At the same time, U.S. production agriculture and supply chains continue to be strained by the multifaceted trade war and Covid-19. These factors not only impact commodity pricing, but also increase input costs, destabilize relationships with trading partners, and have a negative ripple effect on the broader economy.

Creating a path forward requires a comprehensive, coordinated, and bipartisan effort from federal and state governments as well as the private sector, from producers to manufacturers to shippers – those who plant, make, deliver, and sell American products around the world. This effort is imperative to revitalizing rural communities, reversing the recent trend of increasing farm bankruptcies, and resetting America's economy for long-term sustained growth.

This comprehensive effort must be grounded in a non-political, national conversation about the future of American food and agriculture; a community-led discussion that encompasses all aspects of agricultural production that can produce a roadmap to recovery.

To begin this dialogue, many of America's leading agricultural organizations and businesses formed AgTalks.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Coordinated by Farmers for Free Trade, AgTalks hosted five, non-partisan virtual town hall events during the summer of 2020. These town hall events were aimed at providing a new forum for farmers, industry leaders, and policy leaders to discuss solutions to challenges relating to trade, supply chains, and global competitiveness. [WATCH THE TOWN HALLS HERE.](#)

The AgTalks inaugural series was chaired by food and agriculture leaders in five states vital to American agriculture's role in feeding the world (Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin), allowing for grassroots and executive insight on trade and its importance to the health of rural economies. These first events were held between July 30 and September 1, 2020.

The AgTalks series emphasized the importance of trade to American food and agriculture and highlighted the need for trade certainty and the expansion of foreign markets. Participants identified obstacles that hinder food and agricultural trade and stressed the importance of finding bi-partisan solutions to overcoming trade barriers. In addition to international concerns, participants also identified numerous domestic opportunities that could support U.S. food and agriculture exports such as infrastructure improvements, including rural broadband expansion and investments in research and development. This report provides a summary of the five 2020 AgTalks virtual town hall events and highlights the challenges, opportunities, and recommendations identified by participants. As American food and agriculture looks to the future, the findings highlighted in this report can aid policy makers and help build the American economy.

A national conversation about the future of American food and agriculture is imperative to revitalizing rural communities and resetting our economy....This report provides a summary of the AgTalks virtual town hall events and highlights the challenges, opportunities, and recommendations identified by participants.



# 22.2 MILLION

Full-and part-time jobs  
were related to the  
agricultural and food  
sectors



## THE STATE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

The United States leads the world in food and agriculture exports, routinely running a trade surplus. American agriculture has built a brand as a reliable supplier of quality food to an ever-growing worldwide population. American farmers and food companies count on a global trading system that drives sales, lowers expenses, and provides a reliable way to conduct business with key trading partners. American food and agriculture has seen too many consecutive years of unprecedented challenges requiring unsustainable government intervention to provide liquidity and stave off a more significant farm crisis.

# 10.9%

Of total U.S.  
employment



Recent years have seen a dramatic downturn in the agricultural economy. Trade uncertainties, retaliatory tariffs, low commodity prices, supply chain disruptions, extreme weather, and the Covid-19 pandemic have hurt many food and agriculture producers in the United States and have pushed businesses and farm families to the brink. Much of this harm can be traced to disruptions in our export markets. U.S. food and agriculture exports account for 20% of all on-farm revenue. When our exports decline, farmers and food companies across the country feel the impact. The downturn in these industries in turn ripples throughout the U.S. economy. In recent years, agriculture's contribution to U.S. GDP has declined.[5] Hiring in the agriculture industry is down 11.1%.[6] Sales of agriculture equipment have deteriorated.[7] These impacts are felt most sharply in rural communities. Fortunately, there have been some bright spots that have kept the situation from getting worse. Canada and Mexico are the United States' top agricultural markets.



# THE STATE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

## 23%

Increase in Chapter 12 farm bankruptcies



The passage of the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA) was an important initial step in reversing agriculture's downward trend. While much implementation work remains, passage of USMCA and elimination of the steel and aluminum and retaliatory tariffs by Canada and Mexico on U.S. food and agriculture exports went a long way toward stabilizing these export markets. Similarly, we have seen some recent hopeful signs in U.S.-China trade after years of disruption. China is the third-largest export market for U.S. food and agriculture and the top market for U.S. soybeans.

## 20%

Drop in U.S. market share of soybeans



Years of an escalating trade war between the U.S. and China heavily impacted our food and agriculture exports. U.S. exports of farm goods to China in the first half of 2020 were the second-lowest pace for exports since 2009. [9] In January of 2020, the U.S. and China signed a Phase One agreement under which China agreed to eliminate a number of non-tariff barriers to U.S. exports and committed to purchasing \$36.6 billion U.S. food and agriculture products annually. While China is far behind on this commitment,[8] we have seen some recent noteworthy purchases of key commodities and encouraging activity with poultry and other agricultural sectors. In other areas, such as dairy, there has yet to be a noticeable shift by China toward prioritizing U.S. purchasing. While the trade disruptions have had a significant and immediate negative impact on U.S. food and agriculture, these disruptions also threaten loss of markets that could portend long-term challenges for these industries.



# THE STATE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE



Competitors are filling the void created since the start of the trade wars. Brazil's share of China's soybean market rose to 76 percent in 2018 and 65 percent in 2019, while U.S. market share fell below 20 percent.[10] After the United States unilaterally withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the other eleven participating nations pushed forward with the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Now the United States faces trade barriers when attempting to conduct business in the world's fastest growing region.

Markets are difficult to recover once they are lost. Competing in the global economy is vital to U.S. food and agriculture. Over 95% of the world's population lives outside of the United States. We can literally feed the world, but only if we are concerted and strategic in how we approach international trade. Recent trade disruptions have presented significant challenges to our food and agriculture businesses and rural economies. Resolving trade disputes and expanding markets present a tremendous opportunity to quickly expand this portion of the U.S. economy, helping tens of thousands of farm families and agriculture businesses and leading to rising incomes and revitalization of small towns throughout rural America.





## IOWA TOWN HALL

Host: Kirk Leeds, Iowa Soybean Association

Moderator: Sara Wyant, Agri-Pulse Communications

Panelists:

- Jim Sutter, CEO, U.S. Soybean Export Council
- Kevin Ross, President, National Corn Growers Association
- Craig Willis, Senior VP of Global Markets, Growth Energy
- Mary Andringa, Chair of the Board, Vermeer Corporation
- Brent Shanks, Director, Center for Biorenewable Chemicals, Iowa State University



Iowa Town Hall panelists focused on challenges facing the state's agriculture sector, including supply chain disruptions and retaliatory tariffs. Participants also focused on the sustainability advantage enjoyed by U.S. farmers, prospects for expanding ethanol exports, competition with Brazil, biotechnology innovation, opportunities in Southeast Asia markets, and infrastructure needs.

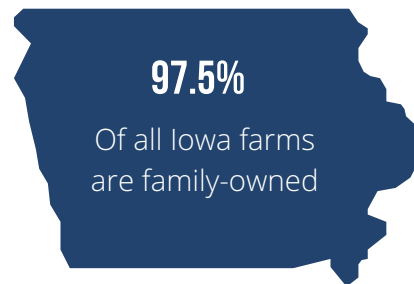
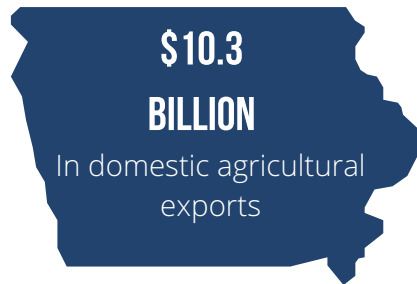
Jim Sutter noted the importance of market access around the globe and how the last few years have been extremely challenging for U.S. soy farmers as they have faced aggressive competition with Brazil. Kevin Ross and Craig Willis reiterated that, despite significant potential for export growth, trade wars and unstable policies have undermined the U.S. ethanol industry's ability to compete in various markets. Mary Andringa listed other challenges faced by Iowa farmers and manufacturing businesses, including the strong dollar, tariffs, high steel prices, low commodity prices, and supply chain concerns. She also detailed the importance of infrastructure, including ports, rail, and broadband in maintaining the strength of U.S. agriculture.

Panelists emphasized how the U.S. can leverage its sustainable farming practices to gain more traction in Europe and other markets. Jim Sutter stated, "I think it's truly a competitive advantage that U.S. farmers have. I mean the farmers nurture their land and we have a great sustainability message to be able to talk about internationally." Brent Shanks provided details on the growing market interest of non-food bio-based products and noted that a significant number of products are currently in the research and development phase.



## IOWA TOWN HALL

When asked about the role of states in promoting agriculture, Mary Andringa said that states should promote trade and work to inform federal policymakers and the public about its benefits: “Trade is good because it allows us to increase and grow, and, for manufacturers, add more jobs.” Finally, the panelists offered a few hopeful insights. Despite the tumultuous relationship, China presents tremendous opportunity for U.S. ethanol producers, and potential expansion of U.S. trade with Southeast Asia holds great promise for U.S. agriculture.



### IOWA TOWN HALL POLL RESULTS

Which of the following actions should be a top priority for the next administration to boost U.S. food and agricultural exports?

Repeal Tariffs: 73%

Enter the CPTPP: 41%

Finish Existing Trade Agreements: 34%





# MICHIGAN TOWN HALL



**\$104.7  
BILLION**

Is contributed  
from Michigan  
agriculture  
to the state's  
economy each  
year

**\$2.7  
BILLION**

In domestic  
agriculture exports

**10 MILLION  
ACRES**

Of farmland  
in Michigan

**19th  
IN THE  
NATION**

For food  
processing

Host: Jody E. Pollok- Newsom, Executive Director, Michigan Wheat Program

Moderator: Terry Henne, NAFB Farm Broadcaster, Alpha Media

Panelists:

- Dave Milligan, President, National Association of Wheat Growers
- Laurie A. Tannous, Special Advisor, Cross Border Institute and VP Government Relations, Farrow
- Jose M. Jimenez, VP, Commercial and Market Development, Zeeland Farm Services Inc.
- Joe Cramer, Executive Director, Michigan Bean Commission
- Chuck Lippstreu, President, Michigan Agri-Business Association

*"The tariffs that we've all experienced had a damaging impact, not just on farmers, but on anybody who's dealing with the agricultural supply chain. Not just the economic side, but the inability to plan for the future," Chuck Lippstreu, President of the Michigan Agri-Business Association*





# \$300 BILLION

Contribution from international agricultural trade to the U.S. trade surplus

# 11%

Of Michigan's GDP comes from the exports of goods

# 24%

Of Michigan's agricultural revenue is generated by dairy products

## MICHIGAN TOWN HALL

Perhaps the biggest takeaway from the Michigan Town Hall was the need for stability and certainty in agricultural trade policy-making. Panelists discussed some of the tools the U.S. federal and state governments could provide farmers and food and agriculture businesses to bolster trade opportunities, including improvements to infrastructure and investments in research and development.

Dave Milligan's opening remarks centered on the benefits of international agricultural trade to the nation's economy, citing agriculture's \$300 billion contribution to the U.S. trade surplus and its critical role in job creation. He also commented on the need for greater investments in agricultural research and development, especially in biotechnology and bioscience. In addition to describing how U.S. ethanol producers were effectively shut out of the Chinese market by recent trade wars, costing U.S. ethanol producers \$1.2 billion, Jose Jiminez voiced his concerns about non-tariff barriers such as Canada's low-carbon fuel standard.

Joe Cramer reiterated the detrimental impact of tariffs on bean exports, remarking: "We certainly have the expertise and the infrastructure to produce the best quality in the world. So we're geared up to take care of a lot of hungry people around the planet, but artificially affected trade has gotten in the way of our activity, and we're playing catch up a little bit." Chuck Lippstreu voiced his support for the USMCA and detailed the inextricable link between farmers and other key actors in the nation's economy. Laurie Tannous emphasized that robust enforcement mechanisms are vital to the success of trade deals.

The question and answer session began with a question about the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in maintaining certainty in trade. The panelists agreed that the WTO is critical to keeping trade balanced and fair by holding bad actors accountable. Likewise, the panel called for stability and certainty in U.S. trade policy. Chuck Lippstreu stated, "The tariffs that we've all experienced had a damaging impact, not just on farmers, but on anybody who's dealing with the agricultural supply chain. Not just the economic side, but the inability to plan for the future." Panelists stressed the importance of expanding food and agriculture exports to Latin America, the U.K., India, and Southeast Asia.

### MI POLL RESULTS

# 60%

Of town hall participants believe repealing tariffs should be the top priority for the new Administration



**\$17.1  
BILLION**

Worth of  
agricultural  
production

**\$6.9  
BILLION**

In domestic  
agriculture  
exports

**26  
MILLION  
ACRES**

Of farm land  
located in  
Minnesota

**4%**

Of nation's total  
farm exports

## MINNESOTA TOWN HALL

Host: Kent Thiesse, Senior Vice President,  
MinnStar

Bank Moderator: Barbara Glenn, CEO, National  
Association of State Departments of Agriculture

Panelists:

- Tamara Nelsen, Executive Director, Minnesota AgriGrowth Council (Co-host)
- Sheryl Meshke, CEO & Co-President, Association Milk Producers, Inc. (AMPI)
- John Griffith, Vice President, CHS North America Grain Marketing
- Howard Olson, SVP Government and Public Affairs, AgCountry Farm Credit Services  
Becca Martin, Director of Government Affairs,  
Cargill  
Harold Wolle, Board Member, National Corn Growers Association, (NCGA)

The Minnesota Town Hall highlighted the importance of global market access and covered a diverse array of topics, ranging from the importance of rural broadband to ethanol opportunities in India to the need for trade education to keep politicians from using agricultural products as pawns in international politics.

John Griffith touched on his optimism about the China Phase One deal as purchases of corn, soybeans, and wheat have accelerated. Conversely, he expressed worries about Covid-19's ongoing disruption of the agriculture supply chain. Sheryl Meshke followed with an explanation of the pandemic's impact on the dairy industry, noting, "When the pandemic hit, the food service demand disappeared. That's 400 million pounds of cheese every single month."

Howard Olson discussed the deterioration of farmer credit conditions, specifically the probability of default and income disparities among farmers.



## MINNESOTA TOWN HALL

### #5

State for  
agriculture  
in America

### 7.9 MILLION ACRES

Of corn,  
one of  
Minnesota's top  
exports

### \$7.1 BILLION

Worth of  
agriculture  
exports from  
Minnesota

### 30%

Of Minnesota's  
agriculture is  
soybeans

"COVID has prompted new levels of protectionist rhetoric in many countries," Becca Martin Director of Government Relations for Cargill



He noted that the average income of corn and soybean growers was \$63,000 in 2019, while the top 25% of producers averaged \$321,000. Becca Martin emphasized the impact of the pandemic: "Covid has prompted new levels of protectionist rhetoric in many countries. We're seeing kind of a driving of a 'lessons-learned' message that regions need to be more self-sufficient and depend less on outside resources."

In addition to explaining how corn-based ethanol currently results in 39-43% lower greenhouse gas emissions than gasoline, Harold Wolle detailed a legislative proposal from the National Corn Growers Association that would establish a low-carbon octane standard to improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions. He also explained how trade wars and the impact of Covid-19 on fuel consumption have been challenging for the ethanol industry. Tamara Nelsen detailed how agricultural producers and businesses had worked for decades to cultivate foreign markets and how the United States needs to have that access.

During the question and answer session, Becca Martin emphasized the importance of effectively communicating with policymakers and the public about agricultural trade. She emphasized that the agriculture community needs to tell the stories of farmers who have been personally impacted by ill-conceived trade policies. Panelists agreed that the U.S. government should take action to prevent future erosion of current trade agreements and to enter the CPTPP.



# PENNSYLVANIA TOWN HALL

**\$2  
BILLION**

In domestic  
agricultural  
exports

**\$8.9  
BILLION**

Worth of exports  
each year

**5.6%**

Of all milk in  
America is from  
Pennsylvania

**\$2.1  
BILLION**

Worth of milk  
exported from  
Pennsylvania



Moderator: Constance Cullman, President and CEO, American Feed Industry Association

Host: Dave Williams

Panelists:

- Russell Redding, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture
- Brett Davis, Vice President, New Holland - North America
- Chris Hoffman, Owner, Lazy Hog Farm
- Eric Boyle, Director of Dairy Procurement, Hershey's
- Kelley Huff, Owner, Enchanted Acres Farm, Inc.
- Ross Siragusa, Head of Agriculture and Seed, Kraft Heinz

*"We understand the linkage in the broader food supply chain that really provides economic stability,"*  
*Eric Boyle, The Hershey Company*





## PENNSYLVANIA TOWN HALL



Pennsylvania Town Hall panelists discussed obstacles to free trade, including political polarization, waning adherence to trade agreements, competition with the European Union, role of the World Trade Organization, and Covid-19.

Secretary Redding began by stating trade is a “long-view game” rooted in building and maintaining relationships, seeking out future avenues for value-added exports, and making the world more accessible. Brett Davis discussed how, in the wake of Covid-19, “free and fair trade is even more essential now because we’re all interdependent on different countries for producing different goods.” Chris Hoffman underscored the importance of global market access, noting that farmers export one out of every four hogs produced in the U.S. He called on the government to build new ways to market U.S. agricultural products to different regions of the world.

Eric Boyle concentrated on recent obstacles to trade faced by Hershey. He cited recent trade wars, tariffs, and retaliatory tariffs. Kelley Huff expressed the importance of cooperation and conversation between the private and public sectors as the United States looks to drive demand for its products and services. “Communication from the agricultural stakeholders will be crucial for the trade officials to be able to gauge the effectiveness of the trade policies,” she stated. Ross Siragusa offered an examination of phytosanitary regulations and noted that poorly designed rules present an unnecessary hindrance to international trade. Mr. Siragusa also spoke on the WTO and the importance of having an arbiter mediating trade agreement disputes.

Panelists expressed the need for investments in technical education and workforce training, underlining the fact that the lack of skilled mechanics can shut down an entire production system. Additionally, the panel agreed that greater export opportunities abroad are needed and recommended engagement with India, Brazil, Mexico, and Latin America and engagement in the CPTPP.





## WISCONSIN TOWN HALL

Moderator: Secretary Thomas Vilsack, President & CEO, US Dairy Export Council Host: ADD)

Panelists:

- Jim Mulhern, President & CEO, National Milk Producers Federation
- Jeff Schwager, President, Sartori Cheese
- Chad Vincent, CEO, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- Jeff Lyon, CEO, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative

The Wisconsin Town Hall focused heavily on dairy as panelists addressed the challenges, opportunities, obstacles, and policy proposals impacting Wisconsin farmers and the broader agriculture community.

Former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack began the roundtable with a brief introduction on the importance of agricultural exports, stating, "Literally hundreds of thousands of folks are employed as a result of exports and agriculture." Panelist Jim Mulhern explained how the future growth of America's dairy is inextricably linked to the success of global markets. He warned, "From a trade policy standpoint, we're actually falling behind our competitors, particularly the European Union." Jeff Schwager reinforced this noting, "The EU is way ahead of us in getting bilateral agreements in place and they lead with geographic indicator protections in all those agreements. Not only are they keeping us locked out of their home market, they are attempting to lock us out of other markets around the world."





**\$82.7  
BILLION**

Contributed to  
industrial  
sales from food  
processing

**\$88.3  
BILLION**

Contributed to  
Wisconsin's  
economy each  
year

**354,000  
JOBS**

Provided by  
Wisconsin ag

**60,000  
FARMS**

In  
Wisconsin

**WI POLL RESULTS**

**23%**

Of town hall  
participants believe  
labeling requirements  
are one of the most  
challenging trade  
barriers

## WISCONSIN TOWN HALL

Chad Vincent addressed how geographic indication protections in place in European trade agreements hamper U.S. dairy's ability to compete in the global marketplace. He also called on Wisconsin agricultural leaders to educate policymakers. Jeff Lyon followed by recognizing how essential expanded markets are for the health of dairy farmers and the necessity of getting bilateral trade agreements.

Asked about growing opportunities for exports abroad, the panelists discussed a range of regions, including Asia and Latin America. They also noted favorable trends for the dairy industry such as the growing demand for dairy in important foreign markets. Secretary-designee Romanski summed up what is needed to help American agriculture saying, "Open access to markets, eliminating trade barriers and enforcing trade agreements to the best of our ability" is what is needed to improve profitability and competitiveness.





# POLICY- MARKET ACCESS

## The current landscape:

American agriculture is the most productive in the world and has for decades enjoyed a substantial trade surplus. As a result, our farmers rely on exports to support their income, and foreign customers rely on high-quality U.S. agricultural products to improve dietary diversity and expand consumer choice in the marketplace. While China, Mexico, Canada, Japan, and the European Union continue to be the most significant markets for U.S. agricultural products, diversification is a top priority and an important lesson learned from the recent trade wars.

## What we heard:

U.S. food and agriculture highly recommends concluding a Phase Two agreement with China and re-engaging in trade negotiations with Southeast Asian nations. Consideration should be given to entering the CPTPP. Significant opportunities exist to expand ethanol exports to Canada, Mexico, Brazil, India, China, and Thailand. For Mexico, this should include an effort to lift ethanol bans in Mexico City, Monterrey, and Guadalajara.

With respect to the dairy industry, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa will be important markets. Effective enforcement of trade deals such as the USMCA is a key priority of the dairy sector.

Additionally, we should secure access for all meat and poultry products including, but not limited to, lamb/mutton, bison, and by-products including leather/hides, tallow, and lard.

Finally, the United States should continue negotiations with key partners including the United Kingdom and Kenya, ensuring optimal market access and elimination of non-tariff barriers for U.S. food and agricultural products.



# POLICY- MARKET ACCESS

## How to meet this challenge:

- In order to feed the world and maintain U.S. competitiveness, we must actively pursue new trade agreements with key food and agriculture importing partners that will provide new market access while continuing negotiations to eliminate non-tariff barriers in existing markets.
- A majority of the food and agricultural sectors participating in AgTalks agree that Asian engagement should be focused on large consuming nations such as the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Vietnam with a particular emphasis on those nations already in or currently negotiating with competitors from the Oceania region and the European Union. Some sectors also emphasized the importance of engagement with key markets in South Asia such as Pakistan and India.
- For the agriculture manufacturing sector, the U.S. should strengthen exports to countries that are key equipment purchasers including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, India, and Brazil.
- The food and agriculture community also encourages continued support for the USDA Market Access and Foreign Market Development programs.





# POLICY- TARIFF AND NON-TARIFF BARRIERS

*"Anywhere from 15 to 20 percent of income is directly related to those export sales. If we don't export, then essentially, many farmers don't do as well as they possibly can," Tom Vilsack President and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC)*



## The current landscape:

Retaliatory tariffs on American food and agriculture exports, export restrictions, and customs barriers are enormous challenges for American farmers and agricultural businesses that need to be addressed immediately.

In recent years, China has placed retaliatory tariffs on nearly every American food and agriculture export while U.S. allies including Canada, Mexico, and the European Union have placed tariffs on U.S. agricultural products including meats, fruits, vegetables, grains, and other food products. The Trump Administration's trade wars and the retaliatory tariffs imposed by China, the European Union, and other countries have resulted in a significant decline of exports and have required government payments (Market Facilitation Payments) to help our farmers weather declining exports and resulting price volatility.

While the tariffs on Mexico and Canada were suspended, as were retaliatory tariffs put on U.S. food and agricultural exports to those two countries, many tariffs and retaliatory tariffs remain in place with other countries around the world. Further, American farmers have also been negatively impacted by import tariffs on steel and aluminum and on agricultural imports such as seed. These tariffs increase the costs of critical inputs on which farmers rely, including farm equipment, crop inputs, machinery, and building materials.



# POLICY- TARIFF AND NON-TARIFF BARRIERS

6%

Rise in the price of farming equipment

63%

Decrease in U.S. to China exports as a result of tariffs

1.5%

Increase in the value of debt

## What we heard:

Trade wars and retaliatory tariffs are universally seen as harmful to American agriculture's growth, competitiveness and reputation abroad. Across commodities, farm sizes, states, and regions, farm leaders expressed their deep concern that tariffs were impacting their bottom lines. Farmers and agricultural leaders discussed how the trade wars have limited their ability to plan for the future because of the fluctuations tariffs create on input costs, crop prices, and export demand.

AgTalks participants also expressed significant concern and frustration that tariffs have caused long-time, dependable foreign markets to seek out more reliable sources of commodities. Farmers cited countries in South America, Latin America, Europe, Oceania and Southeast Asia as gaining in market share and overall competitiveness with American agriculture because of tariff hikes and volatility.

Finally, farm leaders expressed that not only farmers, but also their friends and neighbors in rural communities who work in related fields, have felt the sting of tariffs. They discussed how every aspect of the food and agriculture supply chain, from truck drivers to grain elevator owners to food processors to rural small businesses, has been negatively impacted by tariffs.



# POLICY- TARIFF AND NON-TARIFF BARRIERS

## How to meet this challenge:

The Biden Administration and/or Congress should initiate an immediate review of existing tariffs and retaliatory tariffs. The Administration should also pursue a Phase Two trade agreement with China that protects U.S. intellectual property, removes unfair subsidies and other artificial barriers for U.S. manufacturing and agriculture, and rolls back tariffs. The U.S. should consider proposing a phased elimination of some tariffs on Chinese products to occur during the Phase Two negotiations in return for reduction of tariffs on key agricultural exports.

In addition, the US should work to resolve the Boeing-Airbus disputes with the European Union and pursue agreements that eliminate tariffs and address technical barriers to agricultural trade.





# POLICY- TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE AND SANITARY & PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

## 70%

Of the world's fruits and nuts are exported from the U.S..

### The Current Landscape:

While significant progress has been made in opening new markets to exports, non-tariff trade barriers remain a significant problem as too often our competitors or importing markets wield policy and regulatory tools to intentionally impair access for U.S. exports. Food safety and animal health measures including agricultural inspections are critically important to protect consumers. Still, such measures should always be based on sound science and use approaches that minimize trade distortions.

Unfortunately, other countries continue to use technical barriers to trade (TBT) and SPS measures inappropriately to prevent or limit imports of U.S. food and agricultural products. These measures can also be embedded in free trade agreements negotiated between other countries and thus exported around the world to the detriment of U.S. food and agriculture. Some U.S. agriculture, food and logistics organizations have argued that punitive inspections of agriculture imports impose an undue burden on unaffiliated market segments including trucking, logistics. Observers note that a recent willingness of the U.S. to employ such measures in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector may further embolden other nations to adopt TBTs.

### What we heard:

The United States should continue to strive to eliminate unjustified technical barriers to trade. Technical barriers must always be based on sound science and should be harmonized with international standards whenever possible.

## 25%

Of the world's pork is exported from the U.S.





# POLICY- TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE AND SANITARY & PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

**\$129  
BILLION**

Worth of goods  
exported from the  
U.S. each year

**\$20  
BILLION**

In projected trade  
surplus

## What we heard:

While the Trump Administration made substantial progress on agricultural TBT and SPS issues in the Phase One China agreement, the United States must now expand efforts globally to eliminate unnecessary TBT and SPS barriers and should seek to build international agreements that standardize such measures and promote exports of U.S. food and agriculture products.

## How to meet this challenge:

Some of the key TBT and SPS barriers that the United States should address include:

- **Sanitary & Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures.** Many nations conceal protectionist interests behind SPS measures including agricultural inspections. The U.S. should use its world position to set a dialogue toward more transparency, especially among top agriculture trading partners where such measures may cause reciprocal damage to U.S. interests.
- **Maximum Residue Levels/Precautionary Principles.** Other challenges facing U.S. food and agriculture exports revolve around Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for pesticides on agricultural and food products. While many countries, including the U.S., set MRLs, or tolerances, missing or restrictive MRLs that are not based on science can be a form of protectionism when they have the effect of prohibiting delivery of U.S. shipments. This is an ongoing challenge with European Union reliance on the precautionary principle, which assumes harm from pesticides and other substances without scientific evidence.



# POLICY- TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE AND SANITARY & PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

## How to meet this challenge:

Some of the key TBTs and SPS barriers that the United States should address include:

- Regulation of Biotechnology/GMOs.** The European Union and many non-European Union countries tightly regulate or prohibit the import of food or feed containing, consisting of, or made from, genetically modified organisms (GMOs). These standards have the effect of preventing import of U.S. products that are or contain GMOs even when no scientific studies have demonstrated harm caused by the use of such products. As with the MRL discussion for pesticides, setting GMO tolerances too low can also have the effect of banning U.S. food and agricultural products that are not GMOs and are not made from GMOs.
- Geographic Indications (GIs).** The misuse of geographic indications by the European Union in particular unfairly blocks competition and trade of products using common food and wine terms used around the world. Often, geographical indications are used to not only block U.S. products from coming into the European Union, but also to create barriers to export of U.S. products into third-country markets.
- Labeling Requirements.** “Front of Pack” labeling requirements in Mexico, the European Union, and other countries increase the cost of U.S. food and agriculture imports and can serve as non-tariff barriers to trade. Furthermore, labeling requirements and standards of identity under consideration in Thailand, Ireland, India, South Africa, India, Argentina, and elsewhere, which are inconsistent with standard international practices, could impose unnecessary barriers to entry for U.S. spirits and other products.

**\$133.1  
BILLION**

Of agricultural  
exports



**\$302.5  
BILLION**

In total economic  
output



Additional revenue  
produced  
from agricultural  
exports

**\$169.4  
BILLION**



# POLICY - INFRASTRUCTURE

## THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

American agriculture depends on highways, inland waterways, railways, and ports. Unfortunately, existing infrastructure investments do not meet the nation's current or future needs. The American Society of Civil Engineers rates America's infrastructure as a D+. Improvements are needed if American agriculture is to retain its position as a global leader.

## WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Participants noted the importance of infrastructure to American food and agriculture and the need to address its current condition. America's global competitors are taking the initiative while America lags behind. Brazil is making significant investments to improve their infrastructure. The need to address shortcomings in rural broadband was also noted as high-priority for America's agricultural communities.

## HOW TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE

The gap between needs and current conditions is wide. Federal and state governments need to prioritize infrastructure funding and recognize such spending as a long-term investment in American competitiveness. Such investments should include a focus on all infrastructure that facilitates U.S. exports including roads, bridges, rail, ports, inland waterways, and information technology infrastructure. Private-public partnerships could be employed where appropriate to help reclaim America's infrastructure advantages. Regulations should be reformed and modernized to ensure that the most pressing projects can be realized in a timely manner. Policies that expand broadband access throughout rural America must be a high priority and should be immediately enacted.



## POLICY- INNOVATION

*"I think it's important when we talk about New Holland and C&H Industrial that we remind ourselves that we have this global footprint. We have product coming and going across borders all over the world. Free trade and fair trade is essential for the survival of companies like New Holland. When we talk about our customers, our customers also demand free and fair trade. We need other markets buying our soybeans, buying our corn, buying our other commodities as well. -Brett Davis, Vice President for New Holland North America."*



### **The current landscape:**

Technological advancements have enhanced agricultural productivity, efficiency, and sustainability. However, further innovation is required to meet the demands of a growing global population, protect the environment, and develop new products and markets. Historically, public investment in research and development has driven innovation in agriculture. This is no longer the case. Despite the USDA's new Agriculture Innovation Agenda, public investment in agricultural innovation has declined in recent years.

### **What we heard:**

One element of innovation that should not be overlooked is the nexus between sustainability and conservation and international trade. Consumer expectations and environmental concerns are increasing. As Brazil clears rainforest for agricultural production, American agriculture can capitalize on our positive environmental story. Additionally, bio-based non-food products and fuels offer a wide range of opportunities for agriculture to help solve environmental challenges and create jobs and economic opportunities, particularly in rural communities.



## POLICY- INNOVATION

11.1%

Down in agriculture  
industry hiring

9%

Of the nations dairy farms  
closed their doors in 2019

### How to meet this challenge:

Direct increased public funding towards researching long-term agricultural goals and issues, allowing the private sector to address short-term on-farm needs. Expanding the USDA's biopreferred program to include financial support to participants could incentivize further innovation. Support of land-grant institutions and investment in research conducted in rural America are key. Legislation establishing a low-carbon octane standard, granting D3 applications in the U.S., and creating blender tax credits would boost domestic biofuels production, help address climate change, and position the domestic biofuels industry for greater exports.



## POLICY- POLICY AND TRANSPARENCY

"I honestly don't think that we have seen a lot of improvement in trade. I think that there has been, from my perspective, a glooming gray cloud over trade for the past couple of years, which has brought a lot of uncertainty." -Jose M. Jimenez, VP, Commercial and Market Development, Zeeland Farm Services Inc.

### **The current landscape:**

The U.S. Constitution gives Congress express authority over foreign trade. During the last century, Congress delegated some of its trade authority to the president. For a time, this worked well as the United States witnessed a decreased use of tariffs and an increase in multilateral trade agreements. Unfortunately, in the last few years, the executive branch has used its delegated authority to implement trade wars and place tariffs on both allied and adversarial nations. Congress largely remained on the sidelines as trade disruptions caused havoc throughout the U.S. agricultural economy.

### **What we heard:**

Policymakers and the general public are often not fully aware of the importance of trade for America's food agriculture sectors. The trade wars have been ill-conceived and chaotic, resulting in tit-for-tat tariffs and retaliatory tariffs in which food and agriculture are frequent targets of retaliatory measures by key trade partners. There is a critical need for certainty and stability in agricultural trade policy-making.

### **How to meet this challenge:**

Congress should reassert its role in trade policy and oversight in order to avoid unwarranted or misguided measures that disrupt U.S. food and agricultural markets. Renewed communications and transparent policy dialogue between the legislative and executive branches will ensure a more stable trade policy environment. Initiatives to educate policymakers and the general public on the role of trade and the trade's contribution to the U.S. economy should be funded and supported.

Supporting and strengthening a uniform global rules-based trading system is vital for certainty and stability. Global trading partners should work to reform the WTO and stand up the Appellate Body to more effectively enforce trade commitments.



# POLICY RECOMENDATIONS

## MARKET ACCESS



**\$18.6**

**BILLION**

In exports to  
Mexico



**\$19.6**

**BILLION**

In exports to  
China



**\$20.5**

**BILLION**

In exports to  
Canada

- Complete Phase Two negotiations with China and end the trade-distorting retaliatory tariffs.
- Explore regional and/or bilateral comprehensive trade agreements in Southeast Asia.
- Develop a strategy to join the CPTPP.
- Develop commercially meaningful economic partnerships in Africa, including completing trade agreement negotiations with the Republic of Kenya, that incorporate efforts to harmonize trade between African nations to facilitate trade with the U.S.
- Successfully negotiate a comprehensive agreement with the United Kingdom to be ratified by the Congress in 2021.
- Reinforce existing trading relationships in Latin America with a particular emphasis on free trade agreement (FTA) partners including Chile, Colombia, Panama, Peru, and the Dominican Republic-Central America FTA (CAFTA-DR) members to ensure continued mutual benefit for agriculture including farm equipment exports; develop a Brazil market access strategy that includes specific tariff reduction for ethanol and progress in tackling barriers to other U.S. agricultural exports to that large market.
- Expand market access and deepen trading relations with new markets including the Middle East and North Africa.



# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS: TARIFF AND NON-TARIFF BARRIERS



**\$1 of agricultural  
exports**



**\$1.27 in business  
activity**

- Repeal the Section 232 tariffs on imported steel and aluminum to reduce the cost of agricultural inputs and relieve the burden of the devastating retaliatory tariffs on exports to key markets including India and the European Union.
- Resolve trade disputes with China and repeal all market-distorting tariffs that have eroded the profitability of the U.S. pork industry, ethanol, and dairy industries and other critical agricultural sectors
- Eliminate all tariffs on U.S. meat, poultry, dairy, grains, specialty crop and processed food exports and avoid establishment of tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) and other import quotas on our exports.
- Remove age restrictions on meat products, particularly ones barring imports from cattle over thirty months of age.
- Lift ethanol bans in major international markets/cities.
- Eliminate non-tariff barriers to crops produced using innovations such as pesticides, biotechnology, and advanced breeding techniques.







# POLICY RECOMENDATIONS

## TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE & PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

- Base regulation of product import approvals on international science and risk-based standards.
- Promote harmonized, predictable, and transparent regulatory processes.
- Ensure that sanitary and phytosanitary provisions are based on science and are not trade-prohibitive.
- Ensure that WTO-inconsistent, non-risk-based European Union standards and regulations (e.g., pesticide MRLs, antibiotic use restrictions, GMO limitations, excessive import certification requirements, Farm to Fork limitations on input use) are not imposed on third-country exporters.
- Affirmatively safeguard generic meat, cheese, wine and terms, including component terms of compound geographic indications (GIs), for continued, unencumbered use in international trade by securing specific commitments from our trading partners. Intellectual property chapters of trade agreements must not erroneously co-opt common food and wine terms under the guise of GI protections.
- Ensure that “Front of Pack” in Mexico and other labeling requirements in the European Union do not serve as protectionist barriers to agricultural trade.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Prioritize investment in modernizing the most advanced and efficient supply chain infrastructure of roads, bridges, rail, ports, and inland waterways, including adequate resource mobilization to rural infrastructure.
- Coordinate state and federal efforts and engage public-private partnerships to accelerate infrastructure improvements.
- Accelerate and expand broadband access throughout rural America.



# POLICY RECOMENDATIONS

## INNOVATION

- Support efforts to establish a low-carbon octane standard to remove barriers to higher blends of ethanol, improve vehicle efficiency, increase engine performance, reduce carbon emissions, and make energy more affordable for all consumers.
- Invest in development of new products for export, including plant-based non-food products.
- Expand the USDA's biopreferred program to include financial support to participants.
- Support land-grant institutions and invest in research conducted in rural America.

## PROCESS AND TRANSPARENCY

- Encourage Congressional efforts to reassert Congress' role in trade policy and oversight.
- Prioritize education efforts, informing policymakers and the general public on the importance and benefits of trade for U.S. food and agriculture and educating policymakers and the general public about trade policy formulation and trade's positive contributions to the economy.
- Renew Trade Promotion Authority to encourage future trade agreements.
- Prioritize robust enforcement of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.
- Strengthen enforcement and lead modernization of the World Trade Organization and restore the function of the Appellate Body.
- Increase transparency in developing trade policy and renew cooperation with the U.S. government, the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee (APAC), and the Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees (ATAC).
- Commit to expanding diversity and inclusion among advisory committees.





## MEDIA MENTIONS

### **Leaders discuss exports, election in town hall (Herald Review – Grand Rapids, MN; KMA Radio)**

Farmers are resilient, but that resiliency is being tested by challenges on the trade front, according to several Iowa and national agricultural leaders. The situation right now, with a trade war still raging and COVID-19 ravaging the economy, is “not a good situation for farmers,” said Jim Sutter, CEO of the U.S. Soybean Export Council. [8.6.20](#)

### **Opportunities Abound Overseas For U.S. Ethanol (KIWA Radio – Iowa)**

“It’s pretty hot in the kitchen, on the trade side,” says Craig Willis, senior vice president of global markets at Growth Energy. Willis offered solutions to “challenges on trade, supply chains, and global competitiveness” at the first AgTalks Virtual Town Hall. “The opportunity for ethanol is huge,” says Willis. He notes robust blending programs in the United States and Brazil, who lead the world in ethanol production. He considers the rest of the world “low-hanging fruit.” [8.3.20](#)

### **Virtual Town Hall Underscores Significance of Chinese Market (KIWA Radio – Iowa)**

The Iowa Soybean Association, in conjunction with Farmers for Free Trade, hosted the first-ever AgTalks Virtual Town Hall. Kirk Leeds, Chief Executive Officer at the Iowa Soybean Association, says the conversation was designed to focus on trade, supply chains, and the future of American agriculture. [8.1.20](#)

### **Industry Ag News 7/31 (AG Wired – Iowa)**

National Corn Growers Association President Kevin Ross joined Iowa and national agriculture leaders for an AgTalks virtual town hall to discuss the future of agriculture, with a focus on trade, supply chains and global competitiveness. [7.31.20](#)

### **Ag Leaders Have Mixed Feelings On Trade Wars (Brownfield Ag News)**

Ag leaders have widely varying opinions on whether U.S. agriculture has benefited from trade policies under the Trump Administration. President of the Michigan Agri-Business Association Chuck Lippstreu says more can still be done to benefit agriculture and current tariffs put a ceiling on the industry: “The challenges with the tariffs and trade wars that we’ve seen is that we could be doing even more.” [8.13.20](#)



## MEDIA MENTIONS

### **NCGA Talks Trade and Supply Chains During Virtual Town Hall (NAFB News Service (Dakota))**

National Corn Growers Association President Kevin Ross joined other national agricultural leaders for an AgTalks virtual town hall last week. Participants talked about the future of agriculture, with a focus on trade, supply chains, and competition on a global scale. “We’re thankful to have USMCA in force and Phase One trade deals with both China and Japan,” Ross says. “But we have lost ground to our competitors, and it’s time to pivot to more aggressive expansion in our trade. NCGA will continue to push for trade agreements in Southeast Asia and many other regions that have strong demand potential.” The AgTalks town hall series will help farmers learn and share their views with commodity associations at a time when most of the major in-person state agricultural events have been canceled or postponed because of COVID-19. [8.3.20](#)

### **Weekly Agriculture 7/9 Farm Groups Host Online Ag Town Halls (Politico – Washington)**

Since there aren’t many ag conventions and state fairs this year, industry groups are putting on a series of online forums for farmers and ranchers to discuss issues like trade headwinds, supply chain disruptions, rural economics and the future of agriculture. The events will run up to two hours and feature panel discussions, Q&A sessions and online polling. [7.9.20](#)

### **Focus on Ag: FarmFest Virtual 2020 to Feature Candidate Forums (Aberdeen News – South Dakota)**

Another special Forum on Wednesday, Aug. 5, at 8:30 a.m., will be the “AgTalks Town Hall,” which will be an open forum for farmers and policy leaders to discuss trade issues, supply chains, and global competitiveness. AgTalk is a joint effort of the following groups: Minnesota AgriGrowth, Farmers for Free Trade, National Milk Producers Federation, National Corn Growers Association, Corn Refiners Association, Iowa Soybean Association, Plant Based Products Council, and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. [7.30.20](#)



## MEDIA MENTIONS

### **AgTalks Kicks Off Town Hall Series (AgNewsWire – Iowa)**

Iowa and national ag commodity leaders kicked off the first in a series of AgTalks virtual town hall meetings to discuss the future of agriculture, with a focus on trade and supply chains. Future meetings will be held over the next few weeks in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania. The AgTalks initiative is sponsored by Farmers for Free Trade, the National Milk Producers Federation, the Corn Refiners Association, the National Corn Growers Association, the U.S. Dairy Export Council, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), the Iowa Soybean Association, Minnesota AgriGrowth, the Plant Based Products Council, KCoE Isom and World Strategies. [7.30.20](#).

### **Iowa Ag Leaders' Virtual Town Hall on Trade And Supply Chains (Osceola Sentinel Tribune – Iowa)**

On July 30, Iowa and national ag commodity leaders will hold a virtual town hall to discuss the future of Iowa agriculture, with a focus on trade and supply chains. With major in-person state agriculture town halls postponed beyond 2020, this conversation will help state farmers learn and share their views with commodity association leaders. The conversation, which is part of the AgTalks town hall series focusing on key U.S. ag states, comes at a time when Iowa's competitiveness in agriculture is being impacted by the trade war, COVID-19 and the increase in non-US trade agreements with overseas customers that Iowa has traditionally served. [7.29.20](#)

### **Vermeer's Mary Andringa Talks Trade at Farmers Town Hall (Association of Equipment Manufacturers – Wisconsin)**

Vermeer Corporation Chair of the Board and AEM Hall of Fame Member Mary Andringa was a featured guest panelist this past week for the kick-off of a new virtual town hall series, AgTalks, which aims to provide a new forum for farmers and policy leaders to discuss solutions to challenges on trade, supply chains, and global competitiveness. [8.6.20](#)



## MEDIA MENTIONS

### **Industry Ag News 7/10 (AG Wired – Iowa)**

With major ag fairs cancelled, the “AgTalks” series of Virtual Town Halls will provide a new forum for farmers, ag businesses, and policy leaders to discuss solutions to challenges on trade, supply chains and global competitiveness. The Summer 2020 series will be held in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania. Visit the AgTalks website for more information. [7.10.20](#)

### **Implementation of USMCA begins: Trade agreement important to U.S. farmers (Agrinews)**

Trade agreements only happen when you have bipartisan efforts that come together,” Costa said during a webinar organized by Farmers for Free Trade. “It is absolutely critical for us to be able to trade fairly,” Costa said. “American farmers are the best in the world growing 400 commodities with the best nutrition, the highest yields and at the best value. We do that every day, and we do it so well that we can export products.” [7.10.20](#)

### **Major Ag Groups to Launch Town Hall Series on The Future of Agricultural Trade and Supply Chains (The Fence Post – Washington)**

On Thursday, Farmers for Free Trade, the National Milk Producers Federation, the Corn Refiners Association, the National Corn Growers Association, the U.S. Dairy Export Council, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, the Iowa Soybean Association, Minnesota AgriGrowth, the Plant Based Products Council, KCoE Isom and World Strategies announced that they would be jointly launching a series of town hall discussions starting this summer focused on the future of agriculture. [7.9.20](#).

### **ONLINE: AgTalks Wisconsin Town Hall (Isthmus News – Wisconsin)**

AgTalks will be holding a Wisconsin virtual town hall on Tuesday, September 1 at 11:00 am central. We are pleased to partner on this town hall with the National Milk Producers Federation and U.S. Dairy Export Council. This town hall will feature ag leaders from Wisconsin and opportunities for participants to help shape the future of ag trade. [9.1.20](#)



## MEDIA MENTIONS

### **USMCA Implementation Celebration Roundtable (Ag News Wire)**

To celebrate the implementation of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson, U.S. Senator Joni Ernst and American ag leaders held a virtual roundtable to discuss the importance of USMCA to farmers, rural communities and ag exports. The roundtable was hosted by Farmers for Free Trade, which showed support for USMCA with an 11 state, 4,300 mile RV tour across the country. [6.30.20](#)

### **Dairy Exports Take Center Stage at Virtual AgTalks Town Hall (Market Screener)**

"America's dairy farmers help produce high-quality dairy products that are renowned around the world," said Mulhern in prepared remarks for the town hall, part of an ongoing series titled AgTalks featuring discussions of trade and the rural economy co-hosted by the two organizations and Farmers for Free Trade, a coalition of pro-trade farmer groups. [9.1.20](#)

### **Wisconsin Dairy Industry Leaders Discuss International Trade Policy in 'AgTalks' panel (Wisconsin State Farmer)**

The panel, hosted over Zoom, also discussed the constraints the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on international trade just after weathering through a trade war with China in 2019, where Romanski claimed many Wisconsin farmers' export numbers were down. [9.1.20](#)

### **Importance of U.S. Dairy Exports Takes Center Stage at Virtual AgTalks Town Hall (Hoard's Dairyman)**

This town hall was co-hosted by the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) and Farmers for Free Trade, a coalition of pro-trade farm organizations, as part of an ongoing series titled AgTalks. Tom Vilsack, president and CEO of USDEC, moderated the event, which featured panelists from across all aspects of Wisconsin's dairy supply chain. The clear consensus of the panelists was that expanding dairy trade opportunities will bring tangible benefits to America's dairy farmers, processors, exporters and rural communities. [9.2.20](#)



## MEDIA MENTIONS

### **Farmers for Free Trade event highlights Wisconsin dairy (WEAU - NBC - Eu Claire, WI)**

Farmers for Free Trade held the last in their series of virtual events around the country dealing with major farm issues. Yesterday's event featured dairy and Wisconsin was the focus. Five dairy leaders from the state discussed what needs to be done going forward to make dairy a more profitable industry. All agreed exports have to increase as other parts of the world, particularly Europe, are getting more aggressive toward dairy exports. They pointed out that 15 to 17% of U.S. production, which equals one day's production, is now exported. And while our dairy exports have gotten better during the Trump Administration, all the dairy leaders said we're falling behind Europe and New Zealand because we're not cutting new trade deals fast enough or with enough countries. Those leaders also said the President's tariffs are making our cheese more expensive and harder to sell around the world. 9.2.20





## APPENDIX

- [1] <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jordanstrickler/2020/06/10/government-payouts-to-make-up-36-of-farm-income/#3c3bb37a1723>
- [2] <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/agricultural-trade/>
- [3] <https://brownfieldagnews.com/news/9-of-u-s-dairies-closed-in-2019/>
- [4] <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/farm-bankruptcies-rise-again>
- [5] <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/farm-contribution-to-agricultural-gdp-at-record-low>
- [6] <https://www.agdaily.com/news/agriculture-seen-decrease-hiring/>
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