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October 19, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer
U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Secretary Perdue and Ambassador Lighthizer,

I write today to express extreme disappointment that there were not any agricultural provisions included in the recently announced agreement between the United States and the Federative Republic of Brazil and to request additional information as to what caused this glaring omission. The announcements of a limited, non-binding deal emerged today over the objections of several leading Majority members on the Ways and Means Committee, and my worries were confirmed that Brazil would not be willing to cede any ground to address their long-held tariff and non-tariff barriers for agriculture.

Brazil's current agriculture barriers represent some of the most challenging and unfair impediments to a level playing field for our producers in the world. I am concerned about the Administration moving forward with a unilateral trade agreement with Brazil that fails to make progress on these issues. Leaving agriculture out of this agreement has sent the wrong signal to our farmers, particularly as Brazilian agriculture has benefitted from our farmers' losses due to increased trade tensions in countries such as China. Indeed, this gap in the agreement sets the stage for agriculture being an afterthought for any efforts at securing a binding and more comprehensive agreement in the future.

When I hear from farmers in my district, I consistently hear that they want a level playing field in world markets so they can compete. They certainly do not want to be in a situation where they are forced to rely on government payments due to factors outside of their control. Unfortunately, that is where many of our producers find themselves today, with an estimated 40% of total farm income in 2020 coming from government payments. Since 2018, tens of billions of taxpayer dollars have been sent to producers through the trade aid program to partially account for producers' market losses as trading partners retaliated. Finalizing any trade agreement right now, particularly with one of our largest agriculture competitors, without any progress on these barriers for our farmers would set a troubling precedent.

I ask that you provide the reasoning as to why the Administration finalized a trade agreement with Brazil that did not include critical agricultural provisions that our producers desperately need. Thank you for your prompt response to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Kind
Member of Congress