

REPRESENTATIVE RON KIND

REP. RON KIND'S
**FARM
BILL 2018
PRIORITIES**



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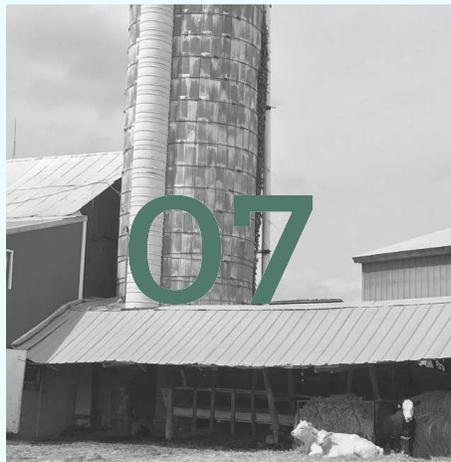
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Farm Bill Listening Tour

I'm traveling to farms in western and central Wisconsin and seeing first-hand the hard work, energy, innovation, and creativity of our family farmers



Supporting America's Dairyland

Wisconsin is home to more than 10,000 dairy farms, but many people don't know the challenges dairy farmers face



Crop Insurance Reform

We need to level the playing field, and start giving relief to those that need it most: our small and family farms



21st Century Farming

We have new markets and opportunities to nourish the world. We need to embrace new practices and look to the future

INTRODUCTION

The state of Wisconsin has a long agricultural history that goes back to its founding in 1848, and farming has always been the economic and cultural foundation of the state. Although Wisconsin today is known around the world as America's Dairyland, it is one of the most diverse agricultural states in the country. Farmers in Wisconsin grow everything from corn and soybeans to potatoes and cranberries. They milk approximately 1.3 [1] million dairy cows and raise hens that lay around 1.2 billion eggs every year. Farmers in Wisconsin work hard every day to make a living for their families and produce food for people across the world.

Since President Roosevelt signed legislation into law in 1933 in response to the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl [2], Congress has sought to support farmers and our rural communities through what is commonly known as the Farm Bill. Vast in scope, each Farm Bill lasts five years and sets in place comprehensive food and farm policies throughout the country. The current Farm Bill is set to expire in September 2018, and the process of crafting the next Farm Bill is well underway.

There have been seventeen Farm Bills enacted into law since the 1930s and over time the bill has become more expansive. [3] The current Farm Bill, the Agricultural Act of 2014, was signed into law by President Obama in 2014. The 2014 bill was broken up into twelve titles, which are various areas of policy. These titles range from commodity prices and income support and crop insurance to nutrition assistance and rural development.

The 2014 Farm Bill was estimated to cost taxpayers \$489 billion over five years, or nearly \$100 billion per year. Given the significant amount of money spent each year, it is crucial that we reevaluate the current Farm Bill programs to ensure they are responsive to the needs of Wisconsin family farmers, consumers, and taxpayers.

Wisconsin farmers have faced strong headwinds in recent years. There has been a consistent decline in commodity prices, over-saturation of goods in the marketplace, rising input costs, and a shortage of workers, all of which have led to challenging conditions for our farmers. In addition, recent events have raised the prospect of foreign retaliation against Wisconsin agriculture, which only complicates an already tough market for our farmers. The next Farm Bill will be a critical moment for Wisconsin farmers and a make-or-break moment for many.

BACKGROUND

On May 17th, the 2018 Farm Bill was brought to a vote on the House floor. After weeks of deliberation in the Agriculture Committee, and a partisan process within the Rules Committee, the bill failed. I offered seven amendments, all based on the priorities included in this book. All seven amendments were either blocked, or failed. The message sent was clear: our work on the bill continues.

To get a better understanding of the challenges that farmers in western and central Wisconsin face, my staff and I have met with farmers from all 18 counties in Wisconsin's Third District over the past eleven months. Through our meetings, I have witnessed first-hand the hard work, energy, innovation, and creativity of our family farmers. I saw the pride they have in their farms, the work they do, and the life they live. I heard them speak of their hopes, aspirations, challenges, and fears for themselves, their family, their community and for American agriculture. On this listening tour, I also heard the need for reforms that take into account the hardships that our small farmers are experiencing.

Traveling through western and central Wisconsin, it is readily apparent that agriculture is the economic, social and cultural background of the area. It is the "Big Cheese." A strong farm economy creates more prosperous rural communities which, in turn, provide jobs on Main Street, in finance, construction, feed and fertilizer and in numerous other rural economic sectors. Currently we are experiencing a very hard time for our local farmers, and this is an all-hands-on-deck moment to help the farm economy continue to grow. I will do my part to make sure the upcoming Farm Bill positively impacts our family farmers, rural communities, and consumers.

Throughout the District, my staff and I have heard that technology and innovation are continually changing; causing a tremendous impact on the farm - both positively and negatively. Even with this expansion and growth, profit margins are falling. Universally, conventional dairy farmers seek an improved dairy policy - one that provides a safety net against low milk prices while refraining from restricting production. Producers also expressed a desire for additional commercial uses for dairy products to grow new markets.



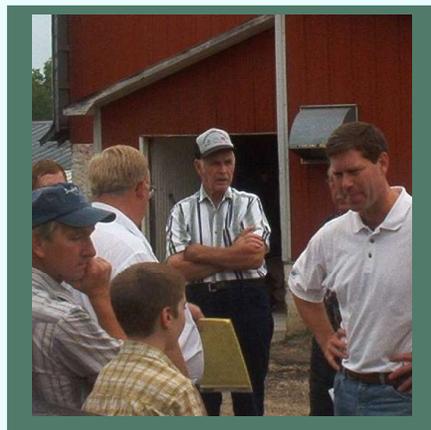
FARM BILL TOUR

Like dairy, conventional grain farmers are experiencing low market prices. [5] With year-after-year strong and steady yields, as well as costly land rents, grain farmers also seek a farm policy that recognizes the challenges they currently face on the farm. Continuously, comments were shared about the need to maintain the renewable fuels standards and continue to find new markets - both domestically and internationally - for our grain crops.

Much of Wisconsin's Third Congressional District lies within the Driftless Region, made up of deeply carved river valleys. Wisconsin farmers recognize this unique landscape, utilizing rotation cropping techniques, contour strips, and implementing conservation programs. USDA conservation programs play an essential role in protecting our region's soil, water, and air quality. Both livestock and grain farmers participate and seek more significant opportunities to utilize these programs on their farms.

Lastly, throughout our tour of western Wisconsin, we were reminded of the growth and importance of organic agriculture in local communities. The next farm bill needs to recognize the role that organic farming plays in rural America and with the consuming public. Ensuring the integrity of organic standards, providing opportunities for organic farmers to obtain financing and insurance, and providing opportunities for conventional farmers to convert to organic agriculture was shared by multiple farmers.

HERE TO LISTEN



(Above) Rep. Ron Kind meets with dairy farmers in Wood County on his Farm Listening Tour

(Middle) Rep. Kind speaks to a future farmer.

(Right) Rep. Ron Kind speaks to Wisconsinites about the importance of family farms at a Vernon Co. Dairy Breakfast

TIME FOR REFORM

For too long we've had a farm policy that has rewarded large agribusinesses, led to more consolidation of farms, driven up land values unnecessarily and made it harder for small and mid-size farmers to compete. The current system facilitates a cycle in which farmers produce for the government paycheck, resulting in overproduction and depressed prices. One of the worst examples of these distorted policies is the commodity support system for peanut producers. Peanuts receive the most subsidies of any crop as a percentage of farmer income, which has caused peanut farmers to produce more peanuts than Americans consume consistently. Instead of providing a safety net when prices are low, the current program sends a government check to producers every year and is projected to do so for at least the next ten years.

Our market-distorting policies have caught notice of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and they ruled our cotton subsidies illegal, inviting retaliatory tariffs on non-agriculture products. [6] Until just a few years ago U.S. taxpayers were forced to shell out \$150 million a year to Brazilian cotton farmers because the WTO ruled the U.S. cotton program violated WTO agreements by providing unfair subsidies.[7] The 2014 Farm Bill finally fixed the program, but the deal included a final \$300 million payment to Brazilian cotton farmers.

During my time in Congress, I have worked hard to reform our farm programs to ensure they are responsive to the needs of Wisconsin family farmers, consumers, and taxpayers. Unfortunately, the Farm Bill has often been a vehicle for advancing parochial interests at the expense of sound policy and taxpayer dollars. The upcoming Farm Bill provides Congress with an opportunity to invest in Wisconsin family farmers and rural America. We need to develop a Farm Bill that recognizes the economic, environmental, and cultural importance of agriculture to this country. The following report provides ideas and suggestions, based on feedback I've received in Wisconsin's Third District, on how Congress can achieve such a goal.

CHAPTER ONE: SUPPORTING AMERICA'S DAIRYLAND

Wisconsin's dairy industry is home to almost 10,000 dairy farms, and the sector as a whole contributes \$43.4 billion to the local economy, substantially more than Idaho's potato industry or Florida's orange industry. However, our hardworking farmers are facing some challenges, including a surplus of dairy products, historically low commodity prices, higher interest rates, and a shortage of labor. Many farmers are at a crucial point where they need relief, and they need it quickly.

This is why last year I introduced a comprehensive plan to provide relief to Wisconsin farmers and secure the future of the dairy industry. My plan calls for opening new markets for Wisconsin farmers, making Farm Bill programs and the tax code more effective and efficient, encouraging the next generation of dairy farmers, and more. As we work on the upcoming Farm Bill, there are some ways in which we can support Wisconsin dairy farmers.



FIXING THE DAIRY SAFETY NET

Wisconsin dairy producers are the best in the world, but unfortunately farming is inherently a risky business. Over the last few years, some factors have caused the price of milk to drop nearly 40%, which has squeezed many farmers out of the industry altogether. [14] The federal government has an important role to play to protect farmers from market volatility and ensure there is a stable supply.

The 2014 Farm Bill made some changes to dairy support programs including the repeal of the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program, which provided payments to farmers when the price of milk fell below a certain level. To replace the MILC program, the last Farm Bill created a new margin insurance program called the Margin Protection Program (MPP). The MPP makes payments to farmers when the margin between the price of milk and the cost of feed falls below the insured level that the farmer purchases. Unfortunately, due to a variety of reasons, the new program has not been working for many Wisconsin farmers. Recently there have been alterations to the MPP to try and make it more responsive to dairy farmers' needs. I feel that these recent changes are a step in the right direction, but there is still work to be done to make the MPP a program that farmers feel adequately meets their needs.

Unfortunately; arbitrary cuts were made to the formula during the 2014 Farm Bill which has harmed the effectiveness of the program. Additionally, we must find a way to increase participation in the program (which is voluntary) by adjusting premium costs. We must find a fiscally responsible way to protect our dairy farmers during times of low prices while keeping costs at a manageable level. There have been proposals that have been discussed to improve the MPP. First among them is a fix to the complicated milk price and feed formula that calculates the margin which in turn determines whether farmers receive a payment when rates are low. The current formula does not take into account the volatility that happens in the modern dairy market. This results with farmers being left out to dry. These changes will come at a price, but savings can easily offset any increase in value from improvements to dairy support programs in other parts of the Farm Bill like the crop insurance program.

ENSURING A STABLE WORKFORCE

One of the top concerns for Wisconsin farmers is having access to labor. Dairy farming is a tough job that requires long hours. Immigrants provide over 40% of Wisconsin dairy labor. The loss of immigrant labor would have a devastating impact on the industry, creating job loss beyond the dairy farm that would harm local communities.

It is vital that Congress implement comprehensive immigration reform to create security for both workers and employers. The current immigration program available to farmers, the H-2A program, does not work for year-round dairy operations. Congress must find a solution to the dairy labor shortage that also provides certainty for immigrants in light of their crucial role in the nation's food supply and economy.

CELEBRATING WISCONSIN FARMERS

Rep. Kind celebrating Wisconsin dairy farmers at a Wisconsin farm breakfast

RURAL DEVELOPMENT



Rural development is an essential part of the western and central Wisconsin economy; these programs included in the Farm Bill have helped struggling communities get back on their feet. I am hopeful that this Farm Bill will continue the implementation of the same (or a similar) Strategic Economic and Community Development initiative found in the last Farm Bill, and foster a more robust economy in Wisconsin.

I will fight to make sure that this Farm Bill will have a robust Rural Development Agenda, it is imperative that we do not take a step backward. I hope that everyone will come to their senses and realize that these programs do have a place in the Farm Bill, and greatly benefit communities. Rural Development grants result directly in jobs that would not be in Wisconsin without the initial payment the grants provide.

SECURITY FOR SMALL AND RURAL FARMERS

With interest rates expected to move higher this year, unpredictability in international export markets, and commodity prices being historically low, it is more important than ever that Wisconsin's small farmers have access to affordable operational capital. There are no better managers of money than small farmers, and I will look to find new avenues to make sure that farmers can receive capital at reasonable rates.

That is why I have been such a vocal advocate for FSA Operating Loans; these loans are the difference for most farmers that keep the farm going during difficult times. Basic operating loans offer a guaranteed option for a farmer to go to their local lenders and get enough money to let the hard times pass at a reasonable loan rate, keep the farm financially sound and not have farmers look at less fiscally sound ways to get capital. Unfortunately, these loans have been underfunded recently, and this has resulted in there being a lengthy waiting list to receive them. I will work to make sure that these loans receive adequate funding as farmers looking to use a lender of last resort should not face prospects of wait lists.

“Ron Kind reaches out and listens. He has been on our farm numerous times. He knows the importance of the dairy industry and understands that changes need to be made to current farm policy.”
- Jim Servais, Vernon County



Rep. Ron Kind visiting with Jim and Gloria Servais and their family on their farm in Vernon County

ACCURATE DAIRY LABELING

An additional challenge faced by the dairy industry is growing competition from plant-based products that are often marketed as "milk alternatives." Dairy farmers are held to high standards of quality and animal care to produce real dairy products that have been proven to have numerous nutritional benefits, not always provided by plant-based alternatives. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) defines dairy products as being derived from dairy animals, yet FDA has not sufficiently enforced their regulations to ensure the accuracy of labels. Congress should support dairy farmers in the next Farm Bill by including common sense reforms that ensure products labeled "milk," "yogurt," and "cheese" are derived from animals as most consumers expect.

CHAPTER TWO: CONSERVATION

America has the world's most fertile farmland, which allows American farmers to be the most productive and efficient in the world. It's crucial that we promote healthy and sustainable farming practices to ensure the next generation of American farmers can continue to produce the best food in the world.

Conservation programs have been a crucial part of farm policy since the first Farm Bill was enacted in the 1930s, in the wake of the Dust Bowl that swept across the plains. Today the conservation title of the Farm Bill is comprised of a variety of voluntary programs and incentives to encourage farmers to improve their stewardship of the land. The programs are implemented by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which has offices across the country that help farmers and landowners protect and enhance our natural resources.

The benefits of conservation programs are undeniable and vast. From increased production for the farmer to improved air, water, and soil quality, these programs are vital for the future of farming and the planet. Every American is affected by Farm Bill conservation policies. Reducing soil and nutrient runoff ensures that our valuable topsoil stays in place and does not pollute our rivers, lakes, and streams.

We need to build upon the efforts of the last Farm Bill. Farmers and landowners seek to participate in these essential and worthwhile programs, but participation demand is consistently higher than funding levels.

SAVING VULNERABLE LANDS

Many conservation programs in the Farm Bill are seeking to remove sensitive lands from production by providing payments to producers and landowners for various land use management practices. One of the largest conservation programs included in the Farm Bill is the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which seeks to conserve and improve soil and water quality by providing payments to farmers to take parts of their land out of production for ten years or more. This offers numerous benefits to farmers and the environment such as improving water quality, preventing erosion, and strengthening wildlife habitat. CRP provides two distinct types of enrollment options: general sign-up and continuous sign-up. General sign-ups, which constitute about two-thirds of the acreage enrolled in CRP, are competitive and are open only during select enrollment periods. Continuous sign-up participants receive special incentives for high-value practices that target specific environmental and resource concerns in the given region. It is vital that the next Farm Bill reforms the CRP by increasing continuous sign-ups acreage within the program.



**"Rep. Kind understands the importance of technical assistance and conservation dollars, He has championed continued and increased funding for on-the-ground conservation programs , which is greatly appreciated by our farming community."
-Harriet Behar, Crawford County**

Another important program that was created in the 2014 Farm Bill is the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). This program, which combined some previous conservation easement programs, provides funding for easements that provide long-term protection from development. Unfortunately, the ACEP is woefully underfunded, and we must work to find additional funding for the program in the next Farm Bill to protect wetlands and grasslands for future generations.

IMPROVING BEST PRACTICES

Another vital way in which the Farm Bill supports land stewardship is through working lands programs. As opposed to land retirement programs, working lands programs allow farmers to continue production while implementing a variety of stewardship practices to address conservation concerns specific to the region. The two major working lands programs, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), provide critical planning and technical guidance to farmers, as well as assistance in carrying out the management practices. Unfortunately, the programs lack the necessary funding to carry out their mission fully.

The EQIP provides farmers with financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices while continuing to farm the land. The next Farm Bill should increase funding for the EQIP. In 2016 only 27% of applications for the EQIP were funded. The CSP is the most extensive conservation program and seeks to protect natural resources connected to agricultural lands. It does so by rewarding farmers for producing measurable conservation outcomes like healthy soil and clean water. Some examples of conservation practices that are rewarded in the CSP include building natural buffers around waterways and planting cover crops. These techniques are proven ways to prevent nutrient runoff. USDA stated that they expect to receive almost 19,000 CSP applications in 2017 but will only be able to fulfill 6,500 requests. It is clear that both the EQIP and the CSP both need additional annual funding to achieve the goals of the programs fully.

COMPLIANCE

Since the 1985 Farm Bill, there have been general requirements known as "conservation compliance" that producers must meet to receive agriculture subsidies, loans, and conservation program incentives. Conservation compliance ensures that farmers who receive taxpayer dollars are acting as good stewards of our lands. It is crucial that the next Farm Bill increases conservation compliance measures and ensures that USDA is appropriately enforcing the conservation requirements for those receiving, or looking to receive, federal funding.

CHAPTER THREE: CROP INSURANCE REFORM

The federal crop insurance program is at the top of the list of agriculture programs in need of reform. While crop insurance is a valuable risk-management tool for Wisconsin farmers, the current program is inefficient and costs taxpayers around \$8 billion per year. The high cost to taxpayers is even more outrageous given that a large percentage of crop insurance subsidies go to a few, big agribusinesses, at the expense of our family farmers. [8] For example, in 2011 the wealthiest 20% of crop insurance policyholders received a whopping 73% of all government-funded premium subsidies. [9]

This is why we need to pass my bill, the Assisting Family Farmers through Insurance Reform Measures (AFFIRM) Act, which would save taxpayers more than \$30 billion over ten years and still provide the necessary safety net for our family farmers. The AFFIRM Act would make the crop insurance program more transparent and ensure taxpayer subsidies are going to those who truly need help. These reforms would end the practice of subsidizing millionaires and bring daylight to the process so that taxpayers know how their money is spent.

A farmer never knows if it will rain too much or too little, or if pests, disease and other invasive species will damage their crop. That is why crop insurance is important – it provides farmers with the risk protection they need. However, this risk protection must also protect the taxpayers. As we start work on the upcoming Farm Bill, I will continue to fight for crop insurance reform.



AFFIRM ACT

This year I once again introduced comprehensive crop insurance reform legislation called the Assisting Family Farmers through Insurance Reform Measures (AFFIRM) Act. The AFFIRM Act has received bipartisan support in Congress and praise from groups across the political spectrum. The AFFIRM Act would level the playing field for Wisconsin family farmers. Overall, the AFFIRM Act will save taxpayers around \$34 billion over ten years.

First, the AFFIRM Act would refocus the crop insurance program to ensure that subsidies for purchasing crop insurance are going to farmers truly in need. The bill does so by limiting annual crop insurance subsidies to \$40,000 per person. While other Farm Bill commodity payments are subject to means tests and payment limits, crop insurance premium subsidies have no limits, setting up an unfair playing field that benefits the largest and most profitable agribusinesses. Since USDA is not required to publish the recipients of these government subsidies, it is difficult to track whether taxpayer dollars are going to small family farmers or billionaire investors who have never stepped foot on a farm. We do know that in 2011, for example, the bottom 80 percent of policyholders received just 27 percent of crop insurance subsidies, with an average subsidy of around \$5,000. It's clear that capping the annual premium subsidy at \$40,000 would maintain the strong safety net for the vast majority of family farmers while saving taxpayers money.

Additionally, the bill will eliminate crop insurance premium subsidies for individuals with an adjusted gross income (AGI) of more than \$250,000. Premium subsidies should be going to family farms - not large agribusinesses that can afford to manage their own risk. The two provisions would save taxpayers over \$1.5 billion over ten years, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).



AFFIRM ACT - CONT.

Next, the AFFIRM Act would reform the delivery of crop insurance by reducing the generous profit margins the federal government provides to the crop insurance companies. The bill requires private companies to more equally share in the administrative and operating (A&O) costs of the program, which currently cost taxpayers \$1.4 billion per year. The bill caps government payments for insurer operating costs at \$900 million per year, which would still allow the private companies to make a profit. The CBO estimates that the new cap would save \$3.8 billion over ten years. The bill would also end the current policy that prohibits the USDA from negotiating a better deal for taxpayers in the annual contract between the federal government and crop insurance companies that spells out the responsibilities of both parties. When the last contract was renegotiated - eight years ago - over \$6 billion in taxpayer savings was found. These negotiations should occur annually. In no other industry does the federal government guarantee a 14.5% return on investment.

Insurers argue that without a 14.5% rate of return, they would be unable to deliver a high-quality product. An 8.9% guaranteed rate of return, included in the bill, still ensures profitability for insurance companies, saves almost \$5 billion over ten years, and won't affect farmers at all.

The bill also eliminates what's called the Harvest Price Option (HPO), otherwise known as "Cadillac" crop insurance policies. HPO crop insurance policies pay farmers for their losses based on highest price either at the time of planting or at time of harvest. Rather than a safety net that protects farmers from bad weather, HPO policies instead pick up much of the risk farmers take on when they use futures markets to get a better price for their grain.



AFFIRM ACT - CONT.

The AFFIRM Act would still allow USDA to offer HPO policies as long as the farmer pays the full insurance premium. This would save over \$24 billion over ten years by eliminating this profit guarantee program.

Lastly, the AFFIRM Act introduces transparency into the crop insurance program by requiring the reporting of all producers or entities that receive federally subsidized crop insurance. And it requires the reporting of the underwriting gains, operating expense reimbursements, and indemnities and reinsurance of the crop insurance providers. Unlike other subsidies, Congress does not know who receives crop insurance subsidies. Given that such a high percentage of subsidies are going to the wealthiest crop insurance policyholders, taxpayers deserve to know where their tax dollars are going.

CHAPTER FOUR: NEW MARKETS

Wisconsin farmers are the most productive in the world. Given a chance to compete on a level playing field, our farmers can grow the best quality food in the world. By 2050 the global population is expected to approach 10 billion, which will require additional food, feed, and fiber. Wisconsin farmers are ready and willing to meet the rising demand, but unfortunately, many countries fight hard to keep in place protectionist policies that put American products at a disadvantage. We must ensure that we continue to find new markets for Wisconsin farmers' products at home and abroad, whether it's through the Farm Bill programs, trade agreements, or domestic programs. It is more important than ever that we seek to find new markets for Wisconsin farmers and not limit them due to our own protectionist actions.

Given the economic uncertainty and low commodity prices, Wisconsin farmers are increasingly reliant on export markets for their products. According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Wisconsin farmers exported more than 3.4 billion dollars in products to over 150 countries in 2016 alone. Dairy exports comprise nearly a billion dollars alone. That is why we must open, not close the doors to expanding new markets. Wisconsin's growth depends on them.

Farmers in Wisconsin that I have spoken with are concerned with the rhetoric surrounding America's trade agreements. The United States currently has a trade surplus on agricultural goods being exported compared to the goods that we import. However, this surplus has narrowed this year due to our export countries' uncertainty about the future of their trade agreements with the United States. Recently there has been a lot of misinformation surrounding trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Rather than facts, political rhetoric appears to be driving policy. Trade negotiations are not a win or lose exercise; instead, they are an agreement between like-minded nations. By working together, trade can increase prosperity both here at home and abroad.

NAFTA

The importance of trade agreements is shown with the United States' relationship with Mexico and Canada. Both are by far the two largest export market for Wisconsin Agricultural products- not in spite of NAFTA but as a result of it. From 2013 to 2015, 28% of U.S. agricultural exports were destined for either Canada or Mexico, an 11 point increase since 1990 - before NAFTA's enactment.

The Trump Administration is currently in the process of renegotiating NAFTA. While there is room for improvement in any large agreement like NAFTA, farmers back home have made it clear that withdrawal from NAFTA would be devastating to the Wisconsin agriculture industry. I have conveyed this message numerous times to the Trump Administration to ensure they understand the importance of these export markets. Unfortunately, the rhetoric and uncertainty from the Administration have caused Mexico and Canada to start looking for new trading partners around the world in case NAFTA negotiations break down.

FARM BILL TRADE PROGRAMS

To compete with farmers around the world, we must have a robust trade agenda that seeks to expand export opportunities. There is no better example of US presence around the world than our robust agricultural export market. That is why we must improve and develop our export market development programs included in the Farm Bill. Currently, the President's budget asks for the majority of these programs to be eliminated; this is unacceptable and cannot happen as it would greatly harm our nation's agricultural industries.

The Market Access Program (MAP) provides crucial funding for farmers and companies to develop and grow export markets around the world. The Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program offers developmental tools to manage and improve bulk and generic agricultural export markets. I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 2321, The CREATE Act, which would expand the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Corporate program through 2023.

CHAPTER FIVE:

21ST CENTURY FARMING - ORGANIC FARMING & THE NEXT GENERATION

The next generation of farmers is going to look significantly different than the traditional farmer of the 20th century. Young farmers are raising different crops to meet new and expanding consumer demands and utilizing cutting-edge technology to increase efficiency and yields. The rise of organic agriculture has created new exciting markets for farmers across Wisconsin. The demand for local products has created new opportunities and challenges. With all these changing dynamics facing the agriculture industry today, we must ensure we provide support for the next generation to be able to grow and prosper in our rural communities.

ORGANIC FARMING

Wisconsin's Third Congressional District is home to more organic farmers than any other congressional district across the country. Western Wisconsin is home to one of the most successful farmer-owned organic cooperative in the world, Organic Valley. The company recently surpassed \$1 billion in annual sales, which has revitalized rural communities across the state. Sales across the country have doubled over the last decade to \$43 billion annually, and demand for organic products continues to rise exponentially.

As the co-chair of the Congressional Organic Caucus, I have worked hard on organic issues during my time in Congress. During the last Farm Bill, I fought to include some important priorities for the organic farming sector. For example, the 2014 Farm Bill included a new cost-share measure for farmers transitioning to organic production and increased funding for research, technological upgrades, and market reporting. The next Farm Bill must build on what was achieved in 2014 and provide the necessary policy changes to support the growth of the organic industry.

One of the major priorities for the organic industry in the next Farm Bill is to increase research funding. The United States is currently at the forefront of organic farming and must continue to have a robust research program to maintain its position. I am proudly a cosponsor of H.R. 2436, The Organic Research Act of 2017; this bill would consider organic research funding mandatory in the next farm bill, and fund the program through 2023.

Expanding healthy markets for Organic farming is another crucial priority to help the Organic industry in Wisconsin flourish further. It is important that the National Organic Program receives robust funding to manage our domestic and organic import markets properly. That's why we should also include H.R. 3871, The Organic Farmer and Consumer Protection Act of 2017, in the Farm Bill. This bill would look to expand safeguards on preventing falsely labeled organic produce from being imported into the country.

