

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

December 4, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Perdue,

I write to voice concerns about farmers' access to export markets with the recent escalation of trade tensions with several trading partners, particularly China. After weeks of expressed optimism by Administration officials for a "phase one" trade deal with China, President Trump is now signaling that trade tensions are likely to continue, if not worsen. After multiple promises of renewed and additional agriculture purchases from China have thus far gone unfulfilled, our farmers are growing increasingly frustrated by their inability to access key export markets.

This week, the President indicated that he had no deadline for reaching a trade agreement with China to ease the ongoing trade dispute, and that he liked "the idea of waiting until after the election" to reach a deal. Unfortunately, time is of the essence for farmers in the state to reopen these export markets. Wisconsin is losing an average of two farms a day this year, and for the second year in a row, it is leading the country in the number of family farm bankruptcies. As farmers are facing these headwinds, they are finding export markets increasingly closed off. In the first four months of 2019 alone, Wisconsin agriculture exports dropped nearly five percent compared to 2018, and agriculture exports to China fell drastically by 31%.

Still, farmers continue to receive conflicting messages from the Administration on when they should expect these export markets to be reopened. This summer, I raised concerns with you after the President claimed that China would soon be making large purchases of agricultural products, despite no purchases being made. Unfortunately, once again the President has failed to live up to his promises to farmers of large agriculture purchases through a "phase one" trade agreement with China.

As these trade disputes continue and with the trade aid package skewing toward the largest producers in the country, our family farms are increasingly at risk of being casualties in a long-lasting trade dispute. To that end, I ask that you provide an update on what you plan to do to provide certainty and support for family farmers. I look forward to working with your office toward those goals.

Sincerely,



Ron Kind  
Member of Congress