

Industry Link

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Industry players react to Trump administration's withdrawal of TPP

National Farmers Union (NFU) — A staunch opponent of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement, the National Farmers Union (NFU) applauded the Trump administration's decision to withdraw the United States from what it calls a "deeply flawed" trade agreement. NFU President Roger Johnson released the following statement in response:

"The Trans-Pacific Partnership was a continuance of our nation's deeply flawed trade agenda, and we're pleased that the Trump administration has decided to formally withdraw the U.S. from the pact to prioritize a fair-trade agenda.

"For too long, our nation's trade negotiators have prioritized a free-trade over fair-trade agenda, leading to a massive \$531 billion trade deficit, lost jobs and lowered wages in rural communities across America. It's time our country refocuses the trade agenda to prioritize balanced trade, U.S. sovereignty, and U.S. family farmers, ranchers and rural communities. The Trump administration should look to do so with a level of tact that does not motivate our trade partners to take retaliatory actions or threaten the integrity of positive trade markets that American agriculture relies upon."

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) expressed concern over the new administration's actions, stating, "sparking a trade war with Canada, Mexico and Asia will only lead to higher prices for American-produced beef in those markets."

Tracy Brunner, president of NCBA, released a statement in response to Trump's announcement that he is withdrawing the United States from TPP and may seek to take action on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

"TPP and NAFTA have long been convenient political punching bags, but the reality is that foreign trade has been one of the greatest success stories in the long history of the U.S. beef industry," Brunner said.

"Fact is, American cattle producers are already losing out on \$400,000 in sales every day because we don't have TPP, and since NAFTA was implemented, exports of American-produced beef to Mexico have grown by more than 750%. We're especially concerned that the administration is taking these actions without any meaningful alternatives in place that would compensate for the tremendous loss that cattle producers will face without TPP or NAFTA."

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) stated "U.S. agriculture creates jobs and supports economic growth in rural America, and American agriculture depends on maintaining and increasing access to markets outside the United States. Trade is vital to the success of our nation's farmers and ranchers. More than 25% of all U.S. ag production

ultimately goes to markets outside our borders.

“While President Trump signed an executive order withdrawing our nation from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we viewed TPP as a positive agreement for agriculture — one that would have added \$4.4 billion annually to our struggling agriculture economy. With this decision, it is critical that the new administration begin work immediately to do all it can to develop new markets for U.S. agricultural goods and to protect and advance U.S. agricultural interests in the critical Asia-Pacific region.”

U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) President and CEO Philip Seng said the withdrawal of TPP will keep the U.S. red meat industry at a “serious competitive disadvantage” in some key markets, “unless meaningful market access gains are realized.”

Sources: NFU, NCBA, AFBF and USMEF.

Trump appoints Sonny Perdue as Secretary of Ag

On Jan. 19, President Donald Trump selected former Georgia Governor George Ervin “Sonny” Perdue III as the USDA Secretary of Agriculture for the new administration.

Perdue is a veterinarian and served as governor of the state of Georgia from 2003 to 2011. Prior to his term as governor, he served in the Georgia Senate for 10 years. He served on Trump’s agricultural advisory team and was raised on a farm in central Georgia.

National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) President John Weber said Perdue will be “very good for America’s farmers and ranchers.”

NFU President Roger Johnson said he is “hopeful.”

“Given the challenging state of the farm economy, more than ever, family farmers and ranchers need a champion in Washington. I am hopeful we will find that champion in Sonny Perdue,” he said.

Georgia Agriculture Secretary Gary Black showed great enthusiasm for Trump’s pick.

“We are ecstatic and grateful to the president for making this appointment. Agriculture is in Sonny Perdue’s DNA and now that he has the opportunity for it to be his full focus, we are confident that he will lead Trump’s team in making rural America great again.”

House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Collin Peterson said Perdue’s background in agriculture is a strong advantage.

“Agriculture and rural America play such an important role in our economy. With the appointment of Perdue, who has a background in agriculture, I am hopeful we will get a better sense of the incoming administration’s policy plans for rural America.”

Agriculture Committee Chairman K. Michael Conaway said he looks forward to working with Perdue.

“Agriculture is the backbone of our nation. However, America’s farmers and ranchers are facing difficult times under current farm conditions, and

they deserve a secretary who will work diligently to turn those tides,” he said. “As we begin working on the next Farm Bill, the secretary will play a vital role in implementing positive changes for our producers and must understand every aspect of the job at hand. We need someone who is willing to work every day with the mind-set of protecting America’s farmers and ranchers,

especially when it comes to introducing regulatory actions. I look forward to working with Sonny Perdue, especially on the committee’s priorities as Congress begins its work toward the next Farm Bill.”

Sources: NPPC, NFU, Georgia Department of Agriculture and the House Committee on Agriculture.

Texas Beef to Black Tie & Boots

The Texas Tech University System was represented well in Washington, D.C., Thursday, Jan. 19, at the Texas State Society of Washington, D.C.’s 10th Quadrennial Black Tie & Boots Presidential Inaugural Ball at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center.

The system, and all four of its

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component institutions, including Texas Tech University, Angelo State University, Texas Tech Health Sciences Center and Texas Tech Health Sciences Center—El Paso, are among the sponsors of the Black Tie & Boots Inaugural Ball, which began in 1953.

“The Black Tie & Boots Presidential

Inaugural Ball is one of the most distinguished inaugural celebrations,” Texas Tech University System Chancellor Robert Duncan said. “The Texas Tech University System and our component institutions are proud to be part of this momentous event.”

As part of the sponsorship, the meat labs at Texas Tech University and Angelo State University have provided custom-

cut beef for the event. Raider Red Meats is also provided beef jerky.

Source: Texas Tech University.

Record red meat and pork production for December

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 4.40 billion pounds (lb.) in December, up 3% from the 4.27 billion lb. produced in December 2015.

Beef production, at 2.17 billion lb., was 6% above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.61 million head, up 7% from December 2015. The average live weight was down 7 lb. from the previous year, at 1,381 lb.

Pork production totaled 2.21 billion lb., up slightly from the previous year. Hog slaughter totaled 10.5 million head, up 1% from December 2015. The average live weight was down 2 lb. from the previous year, at 283 lb.

January to December 2016 commercial red meat production was 50.4 billion lb., up 4% from 2015.

Accumulated beef production was up 6% from last year, veal was down 9%, pork was up 2% from last year, and lamb and mutton production was down slightly.

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service.

K-State offers youth animal science learning opportunity

Students from across the country with an interest in the livestock industry and related careers can apply now for the Kansas State University (K-State) Animal Sciences Leadership Academy (KASLA). The academy is an intensive four-day educational experience designed to enhance the leadership skills and animal science knowledge of students in ninth through 12th grades.

Hosted by the K-State Department of Animal Sciences and Industry and sponsored by the Livestock and Meat Industry Council, the academy's goal is to develop young leaders within the livestock industry and prepare them for a successful future in the field.

This year's program will take place June 14-17 in Manhattan. Applications are due April 1 and can be found at www.YouthLivestock.KSU.edu.

Source: K-State Research and Extension News.

Presidential Inaugural Parade shone spotlight on agriculture

In its continuing effort to “reconnect city with country,” RFD-TV organized the Rural Tractor Brigade, which was added to the 2017 Presidential Inaugural Parade, themed “We The People: Our American Journey.” RFD-TV invited every tractor manufacturer to participate, and those confirmed included Case IH, Challenger, John Deere, Kioti, Kubota, Mahindra, Massey-Ferguson and New Holland, who showcased tractors used in modern agriculture production. The parade was broadcast live on CNN, Fox News and MSNBC at 3 p.m. EST.

Members of the National FFA carried the banner for the Rural Tractor Brigade and led a contingent of colorful tractors that help make America's farmers and ranchers the most efficient food and fiber producers in the world. RFD-TV and Rural Radio, channel 147 on SiriusXM, carried updates throughout the week on *Market Day Report* and *Rural Evening News*. On Inauguration Day, RFD-TV and Rural Radio offered live updates beginning at 9 a.m. EST and continued through the course of the day, with

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complete highlights on the *Rural Evening News* at 11:30 p.m. EST.

Source: RFD-TV.

Chairman Conaway disappointed in Organic Animal Welfare Rule

On Jan. 18, Ag Committee Chairman K. Michael Conaway issued the following

statement in response to the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) release of its new organic animal welfare standards.

"I am disappointed to see yet another controversial rule pushed through during the final hours of the Obama administration. Not only do animal welfare standards go beyond the scope of the National Organic Program, the

requirements regarding expanded outdoor access for poultry fly in the face of lessons learned from the recent and devastating outbreak of HPAI (highly pathogenic avian influenza), and are particularly concerning given the detection of the virus in a wild duck in Montana earlier this month. I hope that the incoming administration will immediately withdraw this rule, but stand

ready with my colleagues on the Hill to roll back the regulation if necessary."

Source: The House Committee on Agriculture.

Immigration reform good for U.S. economy, agriculture

Immigration reform continues to be a hot topic on the political scene and a priority for farmers and ranchers. In a session at the AFBF 2017 Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show, Tom Hertz of the USDA and Mark Delich of FWD.us discussed the economic and political realities of the current immigration system and the impact of proposed reforms.

Tom Hertz, economist at the USDA's Economic Research Service, explained trends in the farm workforce, including declining immigration rates and rising labor costs. Even though farm wages are up, the agriculture workforce still faces a labor deficit, and demand for workers continues to increase, said Hertz.

Hertz outlined a recent USDA report, assessed the impact of expanding the H2A program (a temporary program that allows agricultural employers who anticipate a shortage of domestic workers to bring nonimmigrant foreign workers to the United States to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature) vs. increasing border security. According to USDA, H2A expansion over the long term would increase the farm workforce and expand outputs and exports overall. Whereas, an enforcement-only approach would likely reduce both the workforce and overall ag output, hurting workers and farmers. USDA's study is not designed to advocate for any particular policy approach, Hertz noted, but to simulate what the leading proposals could look like 15 years down the road.

Taking a look at the political landscape, Mark Delich, director of congressional affairs at FWD.us, an organization that supports comprehensive immigration reform, improving the quality of American education, and encouraging more investment in scientific innovation, emphasized that fixing our "broken immigration system" is about more than just border security. Agriculture is looking for a balanced approach to immigration reform that also addresses the worker-visa program and the status of undocumented workers. Immigration from Mexico is actually down in recent years due to economic improvements there and increased U.S. border patrol, according to Delich.

"We're a nation started by immigrants," Delich said. "It's important to start the reform discussion by looking at the overall benefits of immigration — the entrepreneurship, work ethic and innovation immigrants bring — and we want to see that continue." Although the issue is complex, Delich said that collaboration and engagement are vital. "Your members of Congress need to hear directly from you on this issue and why it's important to you."

Source: AFBF.