

Blain's Farm & Fleet: Welcomes Speaker Ryan and Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue for the 'Back to Our Roots' Tour

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Janesville, Wisconsin – Blain's Farm & Fleet is honored to host the U.S. Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan, and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, on Thursday, August 3 at 4 pm for a private listening session as part of a five-state RV tour entitled the 'Back to Our Roots' Tour. The tour seeks to gather input on the 2018 Farm Bill and increasing rural prosperity. Blain's Farm & Fleet is recognized for best-in-class service to farm and rural customers and for deep expertise in the business and governmental factors influencing the agriculture industry; as such, Blain's Farm & Fleet has been selected to discuss the industry's challenges and opportunities with the Secretary and Speaker. Media outlets wishing to attend this listening session must RSVP to press@oc.usda.gov and ian@mail.house.gov by 6 p.m. on Wednesday, August 2.

"We have immense appreciation and respect for the farmers and family-owned farms that are the anchors of our communities and the fabric of America. After 62 years of serving customers with 'rural sensibilities' we are honored to be their voice on this occasion," says Owner/President and CEO of Blain's Farm & Fleet, Jane Blain Gilbertson. "We are encouraged by discussion of an interagency task force focused on agriculture and rural prosperity, and we hope to hear more about how he is bringing leaders together to prioritize rural Americans in an unprecedented way."

“The ‘Back to our Roots’ Farm Bill and rural prosperity RV listening tour will allow us to hear directly from people in agriculture across the country, as well as our consumers – they are the ones on the front lines of American agriculture and they know best what the current issues are,” Secretary Perdue said in a statement released by the White House yesterday. “USDA will be intimately involved as Congress deliberates and formulates the 2018 Farm Bill. We are committed to making the resources and the research available so that Congress can make good facts-based, data-driven decisions.”

Thursday’s listening session attendees will include leadership from the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation and agriculture buyers, senior leadership and store managers from each of Blain’s Farm & Fleet’s 38 locations across Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois.

The Secretary chairs the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity, which kicked off in June 2017 with efforts to examine the current barriers to economic prosperity in rural America and how innovation, infrastructure and technology play a role in long-term rural prosperity.

Blain’s Farm & Fleet is committed to supporting farmers from an early age through their generous donations to local FFA and 4-H programs. In 2016, Founders Bert and Claude Blain were inducted into the Agriculture Hall of Fame by the Ag Business Council of Rock County for their work in supporting agribusiness and creating a business climate conducive to attracting and retaining the agriculture industry.

“We, as both the Blain’s family and Blain’s Farm & Fleet, take great pride in the hard work of our farmers and what the industry means for the success of our local and national economy. It is our honor to be selected to represent the industry to our nation’s leaders,” adds Blain Gilbertson.

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About Blain’s Farm & Fleet: Blain’s Farm & Fleet is a second generation, family-owned business which was opened in 1955 by Blain Gilbertson’s dad, Bert Blain, and uncle, Claude Blain. For 62 years, the family-owned and operated stores have proudly served 38 communities throughout Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa, with headquarters in Janesville, WI. Blain’s Farm & Fleet has over 4,400 associates with 600 in two Janesville locations. Blain’s Farm & Fleet is trusted to provide high quality products, competitive prices and reliable service both in its stores and

throughout the USA at FarmAndFleet.com.