

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation: Co-hosts event on importance of free and fair trade

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Contact: Amy Eckelberg, Executive Director of Public Relations, 608.828.5706

MADISON – [Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation](#) and [Farmers for Free Trade](#) co-hosted a roundtable on the importance of fair and free trade policies on state agricultural exports.

The roundtable, held on Wednesday, May 30, at the Arlington Agricultural Research Station, featured Wisconsin agribusiness owners, farmers, including Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Jim Holte, and Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Sheila Harsdorf.

During the event roundtable participants discussed the need for certainty and predictability of trade policies. In 2017, Wisconsin exported \$3.5 billion of agricultural products to 147 countries, an increase of 3.6% compared to the previous year.

“Wisconsin farmers greatly benefit from trade,” said Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Jim Holte. “Wisconsin ranks 12th nationally for the value of agricultural exports. It’s important to our state’s economy.”

To emphasize the importance of free and fair trade Holte signed-on to a letter with other state Farm Bureau presidents across the Midwest. The letter, dated May 15, was addressed to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue asking him to work with President Donald Trump to end the escalation of trade disputes with China that have and continue to threaten market opportunities for agricultural commodities

and products.

The letter also asked Secretary Perdue to develop a plan to provide monetary compensation to farmers who may be hurt by retaliatory measures China may take in response to proposed U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods. While the letter asked for monetary compensation, an emphasis was made to the Secretary that farmers would first and foremost like access to markets, not checks from the government in lieu of trade opportunities.

“Wisconsin Farm Bureau has been a long-time supporter of open markets and fair trade because our farmers can and should be able to compete in a global market place,” said Holte.

The May 30 event was held to continue to promote the need for fair trade and to give farmers a chance to talk with media representatives about why they need access to global markets.

Farmers for Free Trade informs the public about the benefits of free trade and mobilizes farmers and ranchers to take action to support beneficial trade agreements. Farmers for Free Trade is supported by thousands of farmers and agricultural businesses as well as numerous U.S. ag organizations, including American Farm Bureau Federation.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation is the state’s largest general farm organization. Made up of 61 county Farm Bureaus, it represents agriculturists and farms of every size, commodity and management style.