

Democratic Party of Wisconsin: Wisconsin farmers respond to Ag Sec Perdue's visit: "What I heard today from the secretary of agriculture was there's no place for me."

Posted on Tuesday, Oct 1, 2019

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(MADISON, WI) — Today, Wisconsin farmers held a press conference highlighting the Trump administration's failed agriculture policies that are making it harder and harder for small farmers to make ends meet. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue was visiting the Wisconsin Dairy Expo to try to distract farmers from the Trump administration's record of broken promises.

In response to Perdue's comments that small farms just needed to get bigger if they want to survive, Jerry Volenec, a dairy farmer from Grant, said, "What I heard today from the secretary of agriculture was there's no place for me."

Darin Von Ruden, a third generation dairy farm and the President of the Wisconsin Farmers Union, said that the Trump administration's tactics of letting small farms die away to allow big ag to get even bigger is "not a good way to go." In addition, Von Ruden noted the ripple effect that happens in rural communities when farms are being forced to close down. "We're seeing more and more rural communities that are disappearing. They're losing their banks, they're losing their post offices, they're even losing their grocery stores...When there's no money in the farming community it doesn't stay in that local community. And so it [money] disappears and the local community disappears."

When asked what message he wants Secretary Sonny Perdue to leave Wisconsin

with, Von Ruden said, “We need to look at something that will benefit all of rural America, not just corporate rural America.”

Paul Adams, who is part of a 147 year-old family farm in Eleva Wisconsin, noted the personal struggles he and his dairy farm are going through. “I’ve talked with realtors to see if we could sell the farm because well, this really isn’t too fun trying to make ends meet...We’ve met with bankruptcy lawyers to see if that’s the way we have to go...I don’t see a real good future in dairy...If I can’t make ends meets it’s kind of foolish for me to stay in Wisconsin and dairy.”

Trump and his administration can’t help but show their true feelings about Wisconsin’s small and medium-sized farmers. Sonny Perdue showed off the administration’s true feelings about these farmers last month when he called them whiners. Trump even went so far as to come to Wisconsin to declare that farmers are “over the hump,” dismissing the pain that is being felt in small communities that rely on the farming industry to fuel their local economies.

Trump and his administration have made clear that there is no place for family farms in their America.

Additional Background:

UPI: “Between July 2018 and June 2019, the number of farms that filed for Chapter 12 bankruptcies (a type of bankruptcy designed to allow family farmers and family fishermen to restructure their finances) rose by 13 percent over the previous year, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation. Loan delinquency rates have reached a six-year high. And nearly 13,000 farms disappeared in 2018, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.”

Politico: “Farm exports in fiscal 2019 are down nearly 7 percent from 2018, exacerbating one of the toughest periods for agriculture since the 1980s farm crisis.”

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: “The fallout continues as farmers, on the cusp of spring planting, decide whether to invest in seed, chemicals, fertilizer and other supplies needed to raise the crops they feed to their cattle. More than 300 Wisconsin dairy farms shut down between January and May, including 90 — three a day — in April alone.”