

Wisdems: How suffering farmers may determine Trump's fate

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(WISCONSIN) — A recent New Yorker article documented how Donald Trump and the Republican party have systematically [abandoned](#) the family farms of rural Wisconsin while prioritizing the needs of the wealthy and well-connected. Many farmers are bearing the burden of Republican ineffectiveness and are tired of the broken promises from the Trump administration. Since Trump became president, in Wisconsin over 2,000 farms have shut down permanently, with a record 818 dairy farms shutting their doors forever in 2019. From Trump's chaotic trade wars to his failed COVID-19 response, Wisconsin farmers are struggling more than ever.

KEY POINTS BELOW:

[The New Yorker: How Suffering Farmers May Determine Trump's Fate](#)

- After the town hall, Perdue took questions from reporters, one of whom asked if the state's loss of small farms was inevitable. "In America, the big get bigger, and the small will go out," Perdue said. "I don't think in America for any small business we have a guaranteed income or guaranteed profitability."
 - Volenec wasn't surprised by Perdue's answer. "I walked in there knowing that's how they felt," Volenec told me, referring to the Trump Administration. "The part that was unnerving to me was that he said it to our faces. They're not trying to hide it anymore. They're telling us flat out: You're not important."
- In 2016, after voting for Barack Obama twice, Volenec voted for Trump... "I never listened to Trump give a speech, just commentary over the radio. I had the general impression that what's wrong with the agricultural economy was that too many politicians were involved, and that having a businessman in the White House would benefit me."

- As rural Wisconsin's fortunes have declined, its political importance has grown.
- Four years ago, Trump promised to reverse the economic decline of family farmers...In early 2018, he launched a series of trade wars, which provoked China, Mexico, Canada, and the European Union into imposing penalties on American dairy products. Mexico, the largest importer of Wisconsin cheese, levied a twenty-five-per-cent tariff on American cheeses.
- Last summer, Trump allotted fifteen billion dollars in compensation to farmers, but the vast majority of it has gone to the largest farms. In a tweet, he called farmers "great patriots" and promised that they would eventually be better off.
- For Volenec, Trump's appeal vanished almost immediately. "If I had known the things I know about him now, I wouldn't have voted for him," he said, when I visited him at his farm in February. As Trump's trade wars escalated, Volenec's problems worsened.
- Dairy farmers have felt the effects of the coronavirus pandemic acutely. As schools and restaurants closed, they abruptly cancelled their contracts with milk bottlers and cheese factories. The price of milk dropped by more than thirty per cent, and some processors began asking their farmers to dump milk. By late April, as hungry people lined up at food banks, one farm had already dumped more than five million pounds of milk, according to "The Mid-West Farm Report." Mitch Breunig, a dairy farmer in Sauk City, had to dump all of his morning milking for ten days. "We took a hundred-and-fifty-foot hose and ran it from the milking parlor right into the manure-storage unit in the barn," he told me. Breunig wound up dumping eighty thousand pounds of milk, for which he received no money. "I would just look at it and think, Wow, everything we did was for nothing."
- Conservatives have won just one of nine statewide races in Wisconsin since Trump became President. The most surprising defeat came in April, in a State Supreme Court race that turned into a national scandal....In a separate last-minute ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court decided, 5-4, that Evers could not extend the deadline for absentee ballots, even though thousands of voters had not yet received them because of delays in the U.S. mail and the flood of requests sparked by the virus.

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