

AAM Senter On The Hill 5-4-19

Congress is back this week from their two-week Easter Break as farmers struggle across the country with weather related issues which is delaying planting and adding to the difficult situation they are facing. In another sign of how low prices are, the farmer's share is now 14.6 cents out of a food dollar. It's unbelievable that everything keeps going up that farmers buy but what they receive keeps going down. For a few pennies more, producers could receive a fair price for their production.

Producers continue to hear that progress is being made in trade negotiations with China and talks are underway with other trading partners, come on it's time to end this Trade War and get in the business of selling our production. If you want to help farmers and ranchers, put a tariff on agriculture imports into the United States at the US cost of production. Stop dumping imports here such as milk proteins, fruits and vegetables and meat products. Recently Secretary Perdue was blasting Vietnam for banning glyphosate, who cares except for the chemical producers, we should be urging Vietnam to buy US products.

It was just announced that Farm Income plummeted \$11.8 Billion in the 1st three months of this year on an annualized rate which is the largest drop in over 3 years. Add the Multi-Billion-dollar losses from hurricanes, floods, wildfires to the on-going Trade War and low prices, it is breaking the back of many farm families and forcing them out of business. Already too many of the young farmers that entered farming during the last 10 years have been forced off their farms and now large numbers of older farmers are retiring early and offering their land for rent while others are forced into foreclosure and out of their homes and off their farms.

In Congress the House has passed Disaster Legislation that included on-farm stored grain now the Senate needs to pass Disaster Legislation to provide much needed assistance. Second, there have been rumblings of another round of Trade Adjustment payments to help off-set damage to producers by the Trade War. This word came from White House Economic Advisor Larry Kudlow by saying that more money might be offered to farmers because of the Trade War, but Secretary of Agriculture Perdue quickly swatted that down by saying 'No Way', we were clear there would only be a one-time payment. This is very interesting that the Secretary of Agriculture came down against farmers being protected against low prices and a loss of markets that occurred because of the Trade War. These markets will not come back quickly, and some may never return to where we were.

AAM calls on USDA to quickly implement the Farm and Ranch Stress Network that was included in the 2018 Farm Bill. The services and support that this program will deliver to farmers in stress will save lives and help families thru these difficult times.

Richard Lugar, former Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee recently passed away. Senator Lugar was a good man and was a strong supporter of voluntary conservation programs and biofuels. AAM did not agree with him on agriculture policies but we had a good working relationship with him and his staff.

On a sad note, Bart Chilton passed away after a short illness. Bart was a long-time friend who worked as staff in the House, later at USDA, Farmers Union, the Senate and at CFTC. He worked hard for Rural America and he will be missed by his many friends and family, condolences go out to his wife Sherry and his family.

I want to announce that I will be attending an AAM Farmer Meeting Tuesday May 21st in Greenwood Florida, at 6512 Blue Springs Rd, the Dellwood Baptist Church Fellowship Hall at 7 PM and food will be served. This area of the country was hit hard by a Hurricane and most producers lost all or most of their crops and timber. Everyone is invited to attend and if you have any questions email me at AAMincpresident@gmail.com.

David Senter AAM President