

Rural America begins to realize Trump isn't working for them; as Nebraska Farm Bureau makes clear

By Chris Reeves

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Trump's proposed Trade war isn't resonating quite the way he anticipated in Rural America, where farmers are quick to realize the implications of Trump administration's plan. In a sharply worded letter, the Nebraska Farm Bureau seems to indicate some buyers remorse:

interactive.nydailynews.com/...

"It has been very well documented that your historic path to the White House came directly through rural America. **While your thoughts on trade were well known by farmers and ranchers**, it would be very dangerous to assume it was the focus of their support. Mr. President, please do not turn your back on the farm and ranch families who depend on international markets and who rely on you to make wise decisions that don't put their economic future in jeopardy."

The caveat seems to be: "look, we knew you were out there on this stuff, but by and large we didn't believe you and voted for you for other reasons"; now, it appears those other reasons aren't quite as important as their livelihood could be harmed in through a trade policy that might sink the family farm.

How important is preventing a trade war to farmers?

www.chinadaily.com.cn/...

That's what some farmers of soybeans in the Midwestern state are saying as they look to the former governor and now US Ambassador to China Terry Branstad to help avoid a US-China trade war that might target US soybean exports to China — the biggest buyer of US soybeans. **It imported about \$14 billion worth of US soybeans in 2016, or 60 percent of the total US crop, according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).**

Iowa is the second-largest soybean producing state after Illinois. There are roughly 70,000 to 80,000 soybean farmers in the two states, according to 2012 USDA census data.

Of course, Iowa, Nebraska and even Illinois are not alone. One of the most reliable exports from the United States are food crops — agriculture — and a trade war puts all of that at risk.

money.cnn.com/...

Farmers across the Midwest would be a prime target for China, the biggest buyer of some American crops.

"Coming from an agriculture state that supported Trump, it's certainly a disappointing development for Montana and the rest of rural America," says Herb Karst, a grain farmer in Billings, Montana, and a representative of Farmers for Free Trade, an advocacy group.

"It just seems that agriculture is going to be paying the price for the protection of the steel and aluminum industries," he said.

The letter from the Nebraska Farm Bureau won't be the last — in the end, very few things speak to voters like a president who seems intent on destroying their livelihood.

But do farmers, the individuals in some states who provided critical votes that helped put Trump in the oval office enough have the courage to look for a path to stop Trump? Will Republican congressmen find themselves in red districts trying to explain how they stand with Trump while he tries to put their constituents out of business?

One thing is absolutely a sure thing: a lot of Republicans running in red districts, as well as Republican governor candidates are going to have to answer questions they have avoided for decades, like whether or not the Republican agenda even cares about the farm community, or just uses it for easy votes.

With VP Pence heading to Nebraska on behalf of Republican Governor Ricketts, it is unlikely those questions stop with a simple letter as long as the administration remains intent on destroying a generations-old way of life.



P.O. Box 80299, Lincoln, NE 68501 | (402) 421-4400

March 2, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation and our nearly 60,000 member families, I am writing today to express our frustrations with comments you made surrounding apparent actions your administration will take next week to implement tariffs on steel and aluminum. While I understand your desire to protect American jobs, your comments seemingly supporting "trade wars", as well as the move to place a 25 percent tariff on foreign steel and a 10 percent tariff on foreign aluminum, has the potential to hit America's farmers and ranchers and American consumers the hardest. Mr. President trade wars are neither good nor are they easy to win.

Ever since inauguration day, the agricultural community has worked with your administration to preserve the substantial gains we have made in international trade. We have met time and again with Ambassador Lighthizer, Secretary Ross, Secretary Perdue and others, and have asked the administration to "do no harm" to the markets our farm and ranch families now rely on for more than 30 percent of their income. However, your proposed move on both steel and aluminum and your subsequent comments concerning "trade wars", only serve to destabilize markets and have the potential to launch retaliatory measures that will largely target agricultural products. This isn't a hollow statement. It is simply what history has shown us time and again when these types of measures are undertaken.

It has been very well documented that your historic path to the White House came directly through rural America. While your thoughts on trade were well known by farmers and ranchers, it would be very dangerous to assume it was the focus of their support. Mr. President, please do not turn your back on the farm and ranch families who depend on international markets and who rely on you to make wise decisions that don't put their economic future in jeopardy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen D. Nelson".

Stephen D. Nelson
President

CC: Senator Deb Fischer
CC: Senator Ben Sasse
CC: Congressman Jeff Fortenberry (NE-1)
CC: Congressman Don Bacon (NE-2)
CC: Congressman Adrian Smith (NE-3)