



**AMERICANS FOR  
FARMERS & FAMILIES**  
**STRONG FARMING MEANS JOBS**

## **In Case You Missed It**

### **NAFTA Has Helped Grow American Agriculture For Two Decades**

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America's agriculture industry has benefited from significant improvements in recent years, touching virtually every aspect of a modern farming operation. These upgrades have ranged from the use of global positioning satellites (GPS) that allow for more precise operations to new seeds that better resist droughts.

But it is hard to imagine that anything has been as important to America's agricultural community over the last two decades than the sustained success provided by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Among NAFTA's many accomplishments, it has opened markets in Canada and Mexico to American farmers that would otherwise be closed completely or complicated by needless barriers. In 2016 alone, this resulted in \$43 billion worth of food and agricultural goods being exported to Mexico and Canada, making those countries the largest export markets for American agriculture.

The growth driven by NAFTA has been nothing short of amazing. Agricultural exports from the United States to these two countries have grown by 450 percent since 1994 and Mexico is now the top export destination for a long list of U.S.-grown products, including beef, rice, soybean meal, corn sweeteners and apples. With record yields being produced across the United States, we've needed access to export markets more than ever and NAFTA has met the challenge.

The benefits of NAFTA are seen across various sectors within the American economy, however. For example, post-NAFTA, the U.S. food and agriculture industries have flourished and now support more than 43 million jobs and economists say NAFTA has boosted the U.S. economy by \$127 billion annually. The benefits are wide-ranging, extending down to American consumers who pay less at the store for everything from

avocados to televisions thanks to this trade agreement.

But as with anything that is over 20 years old, improvements can be made to NAFTA to modernize and optimize it for a changing economy. To that end, President Trump campaigned on improving America's trade deals and his administration has already entered into negotiations with our neighbors to make improvements to NAFTA.

While updating this trade agreement so it continues to grow American jobs and the economy well into the 21st century is the right thing to do, an outright withdrawal from NAFTA would be a profound mistake.

The facts show that NAFTA has helped grow agricultural production and jobs, strengthening rural communities across the country. It is these very same communities that largely propelled President Trump's electoral success, with nearly 75 percent of farm-belt voters supporting his campaign in 2016. These voters understand that there can be improvements made to NAFTA, and they should be undertaken, but ending NAFTA would do severe harm to many.

Encouragingly, President Trump and others in his administration have made statements that indicate they understand the importance of maintaining and modernizing NAFTA. But work remains to be done to ensure that this trade deal, which has already benefited so many, is allowed to continue to play an important role in growing American jobs for years to come.

That is why a group of more than 130 leading food and agricultural organizations sent a letter to President Donald Trump expressing their eagerness to work "with the Trump administration on ways to modernize NAFTA in ways that preserve and expand upon the gains achieved." Now, a new group, Americans for Farmers and Families, has formed to tell the story of NAFTA's success and work to ensure that the Trump Administration and leaders in Congress understand exactly what's at stake.

After so much progress, we cannot turn back the clock and deny American farmers access to critical markets. Let's make improvements to NAFTA in a sensible way so farmers across America can continue to do what they do best — feed the world.

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