



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

## **In Case You Missed It**

### **Preserving And Updating NAFTA Is Crucial For America's Farmers**

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From new seeds to improved equipment, farming practices have been vastly upgraded over the past two decades. However, while these modern tools have undoubtedly transformed the way we farm, the markets where we sell our produce have had an even larger impact on American agriculture.

The North American Free Trade Agreement was signed into law in 1994 and has since opened markets in Canada and Mexico to American farmers that were previously out of reach.

There is no single industry that does more to support the U.S. economy than the agriculture and food sectors. Together, these industries support 43 million jobs or 20 percent of the American workforce. For a sector that supports such a large portion of our economy, one fact is clear: A strong farming economy is synonymous with a vibrant U.S. economy, and policymakers ought to take the necessary steps to empower America's farmers to maintain and increase production.

From farmers who can export goods to Mexico and Canada to consumers who pay less at the grocery store, the benefits of NAFTA span across all sectors of the U.S. economy, bringing jobs and economic prosperity to millions of American families. For example, agricultural exports from the U.S. to Mexico and Canada have grown by 450 percent since 1994 and supported \$127 billion in annual economic activity.

However, like any international trade agreement, NAFTA is not immune to shifting global dynamics, and an updated agreement is needed to continue creating economic and job growth for America's farmers and ranchers.

Thankfully, President Donald Trump recognizes this reality and has already entered

negotiations with the promise of creating an improved deal that is optimized for the 21st century economy.

While modernizing the agreement would surely benefit America's food and agriculture industries, consumers and the economy, a withdrawal from NAFTA would devastate communities and families across the heartland. With nearly three in four farm-belt voters supporting Trump's 2016 campaign, the people impacted by such a decision would be the same constituencies that rallied behind the "America First" promise and catapulted Trump into the Oval Office.

Encouragingly, Trump remains a strong supporter of America's rural communities and is fighting for a better deal on NAFTA, as opposed to pulling out of the agreement. In fact, U.S Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said during a recent exchange that scrapping NAFTA would be "bad" as reported by Politico.

We could not agree more, which is why Americans for Farmers & Families was founded. We are a coalition of more than 30 leading food and agricultural organizations from across the country committed to ensuring that U.S. farmers continue to benefit from NAFTA for years to come. We hear from people who rely on the agreement every day, and we are working to ensure their stories are front and center as the Trump administration and Congressional leaders determine how best to improve NAFTA.

Inside the Beltway, it is easy to lose sight of where our food comes from, but we know Trump has a full appreciation for the contributions of America's agriculture industry which relies on NAFTA to keep their businesses on the farm.

Withdrawing from NAFTA would hurt rural families and the U.S. economy, both of which are completely intertwined. Instead, it is time we roll up our sleeves and make commonsense improvements to the agreement so our farmers can continue accessing these vital markets and putting food on our plates and growing jobs in our nation.

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To access the op-ed, click [here](#).

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