

SAMPLE OP-ED

Consider submitting the following op-ed article (with any personalization you want to add) to your local newspaper.

Tariffs put American agriculture on the countdown clock

America's farmers and ranchers benefit greatly from trade. Our nation enjoys a positive agricultural trade balance. Last year, we exported \$140 billion in farm products, \$21 billion more than we bought. Unfortunately, our track record of success made us a big target for harsh retaliatory tariffs from foreign nations after President Trump lowered the boom on those nations for their unfair trade practices.

Without immediate action by the Administration to engage with other nations and negotiate an end to this trade war, the clock will soon strike midnight and time will have run out for many of nation's farm families.

Farmers and ranchers were already facing economic peril before this trade war hit. Net farm income was down more than 50 percent. Debt levels were rising. Now, with the market impact of these foreign tariffs, prices for our farm products have tanked even further, in some cases below the cost of production. These back-and-forth tariffs could not have come at a worse time for U.S. agriculture. Many farmers will be forced to sell their crops and livestock at rock-bottom prices, leaving them unable to repay operating loans.

Recognizing that farmers and ranchers were the biggest bullseye for these foreign tariffs, the Agriculture Department recently announced a trade assistance package. The assistance certainly will provide a measure of relief, but this is merely a temporary bandage. It will give the Administration more time to negotiate an end to the trade war—but the clock is still ticking.

We need trade, not tariffs. Negotiations can be difficult and take a long time, but tariffs are not the answer. They're not easy to ratchet back, and they often send the message that countries are not open for business.

We farmers and ranchers are doing all we can to convince our government to engage in talks to end this trade war. But that will be just the first step. Even after the tariffs are lifted, it will take a lot of hard work to regain markets that took years to build. We must start that effort as soon as possible. Unless we end this trade war soon, American agriculture will lose our place as a leader in the global marketplace.

As stockpiles of unsold ag products grow, so will the damage to the farm and ranch families who feed our nation. We need a win in the trade arena, and we need it now.