

Do Farmers Want Another Round of Market Facilitation Payments?

Another round of Market Facilitation Payments and the media wants to know what farmers think about it.

Is this what farmers want? Are farmers thrilled about it? How do they feel about President Trump? Can we get the U.S. and China back at the negotiation table? How much patience do U.S. farmers have and at what level will they leave their support from Trump? How do we feel about being patriots? Will farmers vote for President Trump in 2020?

These and other questions are being asked by the media. Before I go any further, let's look at some background information.

The new round of MFP will total \$16 billion. It will be split into three separate payments and payments will be based on a per acre basis. If commodity prices increase, they reserve the right to not pay out the last two payments. First payment will probably reach farmers in July. This is different than MFP Round 1, where payments were based on \$ per commodity.

Currently the markets are on a rollercoaster. In addition to the trade issues, the entire Midwest is dealing with wet weather issues where farmers are trying to plant crops. But last week trade issues took center stage for at least some of the media.

So, what does the media want to know?

The first question they want to know is what do farmers think of the President they voted in. Do farmers regret their decision? First, with only 1% of U.S. population that are farmers, they don't have the power to swing an election. Not even close. Secondly, I know not all farmers voted for President Trump. I have really good farming friends on both sides of the aisle. But it's the angle the media wants to take. It was fairly obvious the slant they wanted to take on their reporting.

Fox Business News and CCTV Interviews

I was part of the "farmer class" the media wanted to talk with. Last Thursday morning, I received an email from Fox Business News asking if I would be willing to talk about my viewpoint on the new Market Facilitation Payment program that was going to be announced that day. Here is a [link to that interview](#). I also used Skype to talk with a Chinese TV show, CCTV, this morning. (A funny

story about the Chinese interview. We used Skype for the video part but used a phone for the audio. They wanted me to use a headphone. I have no headphones for my Iphone! I had to chase down my husband in a tractor to ask if I could use his ancient, but reliable, flip phone to conduct the interview. I will probably never live that down.)

So how did I prepare for this interview? I started prepping myself with background information. I received some talking points from commodity organizations. In fact, I had 3 pages of notes. My main message was that farmers do not want aid, we want trade. I know of no farmer that prefers aid. We are farmers. This is what we are born to do. It kills us if we cannot plant our crops. I know there are people that think we want “welfare”, but the truth is far from it. So I was armed with information.

As my interview with Fox Business Network started, I stated how I was appreciative for the aid, but it was only a short-term fix and not a solution. The ag industry knows how important it is to achieve a good trade deal with China. We also know that China consumes a lot of pork. It is their meat of choice. China has been a good market for us, both in pork and soybean sales. And we also know that with the African Swine Fever devastation China has experienced, they will be looking to feed their people. Their consumption of soybeans will be lower because with a much lower hog inventory, they don't have the need for soybeans to feed their animals. Yes, there are many moving parts, which does not make this a simple issue. I will also say that media interviews are very short having only talked about maybe ½ page of my scribbled notes.

The Bottom Line

My hope is the President Trump and President Xi will meet at the G20 Summit next month and hopefully refuel the negotiations. BOTH COUNTRIES NEED TO NEGOTIATE. Currently China put on an additional 50% tariff on top of the original 12%. The pork industry wants to bring the tariff level back down to the original 12%. Soybeans have a 25% tariff.

We have worked too hard and too long to build our family farm and are dismayed about the negative impact trade agreements (and something we have zero control over) have on our farming business.

We want the two Presidents to sit down and reinitiate the trade talks. Get the deal done. Farmers are depending on it.

print

Please follow and like us:



