

Moran: Farmers in dire straits

*Editor's note: the following was submitted by the office of U.S. Senator Jerry Moran*

**(MSC News)--U.S. Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) – member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture – Monday offered United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Sonny Perdue his recommendations on how to expand export markets, distribute the potential additional round of trade assistance programs and purchase U.S.-grown commodities for international food aid programs.**

**First and foremost: resolve the ongoing trade dispute with China.**

**“The tariffs our country levied against China, and China’s retaliatory tariffs targeted at our farmers and ranchers, threaten to cause long term damage to U.S. agriculture,” Sen. Moran wrote. “Kansas farmers and ranchers understand the need to hold China accountable for bad behavior on trade. Yet, net farm income has fallen by 50 percent since 2013 and the trade war has pushed commodity prices down even further. Many farmers and ranchers are on the verge of financial collapse. Another round of payments to producers and commodity purchases by USDA may provide short term relief for farmers, but will not make up for lost export markets and long term implications of the trade disputes.”**

**“The President has encouraged U.S. consumers to not buy goods from China as a way to avoid paying tariffs,” Sen. Moran continued. “However, consumers changing their purchasing decisions to avoid the tariffs provides no solution or relief for Kansas and other states who are dependent on selling what we produce to China and other foreign markets. The same logic expressed by President Trump applies to foreign buyers who are choosing to no longer purchase U.S. agriculture commodities in a similar attempt to avoid the retaliatory tariffs applied to our exports.”**

**“When determining the design of the trade programs, I urge you to include investments in international food aid programs, make certain payments to farmers do not distort planting decisions, and focus export promotion programs on new markets immediately available to producers,” Sen. Moran continued. “I agree with President Trump that investing in international food aid ought to be a component of trade assistance efforts.”**

