

Governor Kelly discusses tariffs

Governor Laura Kelly met Thursday in Washington D.C. with delegates from the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to discuss the impact of tariffs and what her administration could do to improve trade relations to benefit Kansas farmers, including support for the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) on trade.

“I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with some key trade representatives in Washington D.C. this week,” Kelly said. “Kansas farmers work hard every day to create some of the highest-quality products in the nation. It is important to me that we fight to ensure our state and our country maintain strong economic ties with our largest trading partners.”

Governor Kelly also encouraged the USTR to continue work to resolve tariff and trade disputes as a way to restore access to the Chinese market for Kansas agricultural exports. In 2017, China imported \$19.5 billion of U.S. agriculture products, which fell drastically to \$9.1 billion in 2018.

For the five years prior to 2019, the average value of Kansas’ annual agricultural exports to China was just over \$281 million, which declined steadily from \$539.4 million in 2014 to a low of \$113.1 million in 2018.

"While many factors are at play, our trade disputes with China have created additional hardships for Kansas farmers," Kelly said. "I was encouraged to hear Ambassador Lighthizer state that he did not intend to 'give up on China,' and that efforts to resolve this dispute will continue."

D.C. delegates who participated in this conversation with Governor Kelly included:

- **Ambassador C.J. Mahoney, Deputy USTR and Russell, Kansas, native**
- **Joe Barloon, USTR General Counsel and Shawnee Mission, Kansas, native**
- **Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, USTR and former staffer for Senator Bob Dole**
- **Ambassador Gregg Doud, Chief Agricultural Negotiator and Mankato, Kansas, native**

Governor Kelly was proud to note that many top trade officials in our nation’s

capital have ties to Kansas.

“With agricultural exports being such an integral piece of our state’s economic health, it’s also good to know that we have some passionate Kansans engaged when it comes to trade matters in Washington D.C.,” Kelly said.

Agriculture is one of the largest economic drivers in Kansas and employs 248,216 people through direct, indirect and induced effect careers – or 12.6 percent of the entire workforce in the state. The state exports nearly \$3.8 billion in agricultural products each year. Aside from wheat, other leading exports include beef, soybeans and corn.