

## **Chairman Conaway: “China’s Predatory Practices Harming U.S. Producers”**

Thursday, December 15, 2016 From the House Ag Committee  
Today, House Agriculture Committee Chairman K. Michael Conaway (R-TX) issued the following statement in regard to an announcement today by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) that the U.S. will request a Dispute Settlement Panel against China concerning that nation’s \$100 billion in excess subsidies—in a single year—for corn, rice, and wheat. USTR also announced that the U.S. will pursue enforcement action against China for its illegal Tariff Rate Quota administration which has harmed U.S. farm and ranch families:

“Over the course of the past two years, the House Agriculture Committee has held extensive hearings concerning the predatory trade practices of foreign countries which employ enormous subsidies, high tariffs, and non-tariff trade practices to advantage their agricultural sectors in violation of their own trade commitments to the harm of U.S. farm and ranch families.

“Among the most notorious is China, which can always be relied upon to thumb its nose at the rules the United States always plays by, with China exceeding its subsidy commitments by \$100 billion in a single year on just three crops—corn, wheat, and rice. Put in perspective, this is more than the U.S. will legally provide as a safety net—including insurance—for more than 100 crops for the entire life of the five-year Farm Bill.

“As egregious as China’s actions are with regard to corn, wheat, and rice, they pale by comparison to China’s conduct in regards to cotton, which continues to threaten the viability of the U.S. cotton industry. It is critically important that the U.S. government take prompt action to stop China’s assault on America’s cotton farmers.

“And while China is undeniably a bad actor on the world stage in terms of not honoring its trade commitments, other nations are taking a page from China’s playbook and upping the ante, with India’s current subsidy regime being similarly harmful. India, China, and other countries that threaten the livelihoods of American farm and ranch families and the 16 million jobs U.S. agriculture creates on and off the farm must be held to account. Trade agreements are only valuable to the extent they are honored by all the nations that enter them or they are otherwise enforced.

“Trade is critical to the United States and particularly to agriculture. Agricultural exports are one of the few bright spots in our balance of trade in what is otherwise a dismal trade deficit in favor of our trading partners. What’s more, America plays a leading role in feeding a growing and hungry world. But, critical as trade is, confidence among Americans—including among our farmers and ranchers—in the framework of our agreements, at least as they have been enforced, is sharply waning. Put simply, Americans are tired of being taken advantage of. The U.S.

government must restore trust in trade if America is ever to move forward with an aggressive agenda on trade.

“While the U.S. government’s action today is long in coming and only a first small step, I welcome the action and urge much, much more to come in order to one day deliver to America’s farm and ranch families—and all Americans—a fair shake at what has been to date a decades old unfulfilled promise of free markets and a level playing field.”

## **Our View: “Fake News” is Nothing New for Farmers**

Wednesday, December 14, 2016 From Farm Policy Facts

Since the presidential election, "fake news" is all the rage making headlines and generating a lot of discussion. Curiously, some in the news industry are the most alarmed by its prevalence on social media and its ability to dupe people into believing false narratives and inaccurate information. According to a BuzzFeed News analysis, fake election stories "outperformed" real news stories on Facebook.

As a result, Facebook has come under fire for allowing the widespread dissemination of such stories and has since vowed to crack down on "fake news." Google, too, has followed suit.

It's an interesting development from the vantage point of farmers and ranchers who have been dealing with "fake farm news" for years – not only from the mainstream media, but also from special interest groups.

There has long been a cadre of Washington elites who know nothing of the real risks farm families face, but speak authoritatively in journals and academic settings of how farmers are shielded from the marketplace.

So for farmers, fake news is nothing new.

Myths, misconceptions, and outright lies about their way of life, the economics of farming, and farm policy itself have, for years, masqueraded as so-called "real" news stories on the pages and airwaves of news outlets that are crying foul today.

The latest example of this appeared just yesterday in The Wall Street Journal. The paper published a sloppy editorial that uses old data, old policy, and old-fashioned spin to make the usual baseless claims that investing in our national food and fiber supply is a "wasteful" and expensive endeavor. If the farm safety net was abolished and U.S. farmers embraced the free market then we all would be better off, the author suggests.

Now that's some real fake news!

The real story is this: the farm safety net provides a little anchor of stability that can mean life or death for the independent farm family when suffering losses from natural disasters and from a depressed market like the one we are currently experiencing. Crop prices are currently far below norms and the cost of production, and net farm income has dropped by 46 percent over the last three years. It is the largest three-year percentage decline since the Great Depression.

*(“COTTON NEWS” continued on Page 2)*

The real story is our farmers and ranchers are competing with foreign governments that subsidize their agricultural producers far more than we do and are cheating on their commitments to fair and free trade in the process. Indeed, farm families, which operate 99 percent of all U.S. farms, are far more exposed to risk than other businesses, and the goods they produce fuel our fundamental needs.

The real story is farm policy is a small investment for taxpayers. It represents 0.26 percent of all federal spending. The return on this investment is a secure and affordable food and fiber supply.

The real story is that the rural economy would stumble without a strong farm safety net in place, harming the men and women we all rely upon to produce our daily food and fiber.

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## COTTON USA Making Business Connections at Heimtextil

Friday, December 9, 2016 From Cotton Council International

COTTON USA will promote U.S. cotton's quality, responsible production and innovation at the world's leading trade show for home textiles—Heimtextil in Frankfurt, Germany—from Jan. 10-13, 2017. At the show, COTTON USA also will seize the opportunity to offer sourcing support to the global home textile industry.

As an added incentive to the hospitality industry, COTTON USA will introduce its new hotel and travel initiative that connects COTTON USA-licensed manufacturers with the hotel sector in order to provide U.S. cotton-rich bedding and towels. This new COTTON USA initiative allows hotel partners to specify and highlight their use of U.S. cotton-rich products so that, in turn, their guests can enjoy the safe and comfortable feeling of "home away from home" when staying at a hotel.

For four days, the COTTON USA pavilion at Heimtextil will serve as an international meeting point for the entire cotton trade, including merchants, mills, manufacturers, brands, retailers and the press. COTTON USA, Cotton Incorporated and Supima will provide comprehensive information about the global cotton market, sourcing, consumer research and the marketing and promotional services that the U.S. cotton industry offers.

Visitors to the exhibit can learn about the COTTON USA Sourcing, Marketing and Licensing Programs and about COTTON USA's collaboration with leading brands and retailers worldwide. Visitors also will be able to view innovative product samples from the new collections of international COTTON USA licensees.

COTTON USA is a premium trademark ingredient brand that identifies products made from U.S. cotton through all stages of processing and marketing. COTTON USA has strong

consumer awareness and preference for COTTON USA, with more than 51,000 product lines and 3.8 billion products having proudly carried the name COTTON USA since 1989. Setting the gold standard for global best practices in cotton production, the United States is well-positioned to continue offering its valued customers steady supplies of quality fiber.

As an added boost to COTTON USA, U.S. cotton producers are leading the way in responsible cotton production practices. U.S. cotton is grown under the strongest, mandatory, enforceable and sustainable farming regulations that include long-term land conservation and lower water usage. The U.S. system's transparency allows for constant monitoring and improvement. U.S. producers, numbering about 13,000, comply with stringent U.S. government regulatory requirements and are committed to the principle of continuous improvement.

## Upcoming Ag Conferences

**January 4-6** – Beltwide Cotton Conferences, Hyatt Regency Dallas. Early registration deadline is December 16. More information can be found online at <http://www.cotton.org/beltwide/>.

**January 13** – West Plains Ag Conference, Levelland, South Plains College in the Sundown Room, from 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. 5 CEU's (3 Gen., 1 L&R, 1 IPM) will be offered. Contact Kerry Siders, Extension Agent-IPM, for more information at 806-894-3150.

**January 17** – Ag Conference, American Legion Hall, 1021 S 8<sup>th</sup> St., Brownfield. Registration will begin at 7:45 a.m. 5 CEU's offered. Contact Zach Bradshaw, County Extension Agent-AG, for more information at 806-637-4060.

**January 18** – Caprock Crop Production Conference, Floyd County Friends Unity Center at Muncy. Registration will start at 7 a.m., program from 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. 8 CEU's from TDA and 10 CCA are pending approval. Contact Caitlin Jackson, County Extension Agent-AG, 806-675-2347 or Cristen Brooks, County Extension Agent-AG at 806-983-4912 for more information.

**February 7** – Hale/Swisher Crops Conference – Location TBA. Amount of CEU's not determined yet. Contact Jason Miller, Hale County Extension Agent-AG, for more information at 806-291-5267.

**COTTON NEWS will not be published next week.**

**All of us at PCG wish you a**

**Merry Christmas!**



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**Editor's Note:**

"Cotton News", a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 41-county High Plains area, is mailed from Lubbock each Friday. Its contents are confined to news items and comments pertaining to the High Plains cotton industry which is so vital to U.S. all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email PCG at: editor@plainscotton.org