## State of the Ag Department

Ag Secretary highlights priorities, accomplishments in new administration.

The Agriculture Department is being reoriented with a new focus on farmers,

its customers, and has already built a record of success, Secretary of

Agriculture Sonny Perdue said Jan. 8. He made his comments at the American



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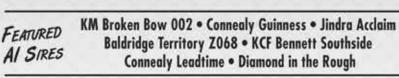
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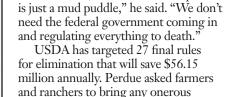


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Bureau

Looking ahead to President Trump's address later in the day to the Farm Bureau members, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue emphasized that the president understands how important rural America is as the

Farm Bureau Federation's 2018 Annual

agriculture and the priority of successful

"To get a deal, we need all sides to seriously roll up their sleeves and get to work," Perdue said. "We have put a number of proposals on the table to modernize NAFTA, and critically for agriculture, to address key sectors left out of the original agreement — dairy and poultry tariffs in Canada. Now, we want to see our negotiating partners step up and engage so we can get the deal done." In Perdue's first eight months as secretary, USDA has already reopened

the Chinese market to American beef,

and eased European Union regulations on citrus exports. South Korea lifted its ban on imports of U.S. poultry, while Argentina has allowed American pork

back into the country for the first time

back excessive regulations following a directive from President Trump. He cited the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS)

overreach negatively affecting farmers. "You know, sometimes a mud puddle

rule as an example of regulatory

Perdue said USDA has been rolling

since 1992.

signed a protocol to allow exports of U.S. rice to China for the first time ever

In his opening remarks, Perdue spoke about the importance of trade to U.Ŝ.

breadbasket of the world.

NAFTA negotiations.

Convention.



regulations to USDA's attention by visiting the agency's website.

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"We have put a number of proposals on the table to modernize NAFTA, and critically for agriculture, to address key sectors left out of the original agreement — dairy and poultry tariffs in Canada."

Sonny Perdue

"It is proof of the importance that he places on all of us — rural and urban, North, South, East, West and Midwest — working together to make our country even greater," he said.

Perdue highlighted USDA's newly released Economic Research Service (ERS) report that shows 99% of American farms are family farms that account for 90% of production. President Trump, he said, understands that family farms are small businesses that must turn a profit to provide for their families. Perdue cited recent tax reform as a solution that will allow farmers to keep more of what they earn in order to reinvest in their operations.

Perdue said a report from the administration's Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity will contain more than 100 practical, actionable recommendations for economic growth in five key areas:

- •e-connectivity;
- quality of life;
- rural workforce;
- technology; and
- economic development.

In conclusion, Perdue praised America and American farmers.

"One of the biggest reasons that we are the envy of the world is gathered right here in this room — the farmers of America. You feed this country and the world, with all of your labors every day," Perdue said.

"The bonds of faith are directly tied to

our liberty," he said in closing. "Every time you plant a seed in the ground, you are exhibiting your faith in a bountiful harvest. There is nothing more American than that."

**Editor's Note:** This article was provided by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

