

AG SECRETARY HEARS FROM NAFA BOARD MEMBER DURING LISTENING SESSION

National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) board member and Washington alfalfa seed farmer Mark Wagoner of Touchet, WA, had the opportunity recently to talk to Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue about issues affecting the alfalfa industry at a listening session in Richland, WA. Secretary Perdue was in the Tri-Cities area of eastern Washington to visit with nearly 200 area farmers about trade, tariffs, farm labor and regulatory reform. Secretary Perdue fielded questions as the guest of U.S. Congressman Dan Newhouse of nearby Sunnyside, WA.

During his discussion with Secretary Perdue, Wagoner encouraged the Secretary to focus on addressing trade issues with China, particularly its use of a zero tolerance policy on the importation of biotechnology as an artificial trade barrier.

"I was clear in my discussion with Secretary Perdue that we need help in convincing China to accept biotech traits in alfalfa in order to help the industry. I also made sure the Secretary was well-aware of how important alfalfa is to not only this part of the country but nationwide as well."

Secretary Perdue offered assurances that he did indeed know alfalfa was a huge and important crop in the U.S., and that the Trump administration 'has farmers' backs' if tough moves on trade continue to disrupt their businesses. "President Trump doesn't expect you to bear the brunt of trade disruption," said Perdue, a veterinarian and former governor of Georgia.

Rep. Dan Newhouse, himself a farmer, added his peers are concerned about trade disputes and disruptive tariffs, but support the goal of better trade deals.



(L to R) Congressman Dan Newhouse, Mark Wagoner, Secretary Sonny Perdue.