

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Trade deal rebuilding has begun

The past week marked three major breakthroughs for the Trump administration — and for the U.S. farmers who depend on trade relationships with Pacific Rim nations.

First, the U.S., Mexico and Canada announced they had come to terms on a rewrite of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Now called the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA, it addresses the shortcomings of NAFTA. President Donald Trump on Monday said the new deal “solves the many deficiencies and mistakes in NAFTA, greatly opens markets to our farmers and manufacturers, reduces trade barriers to the U.S. and will bring all three Great Nations together in competition with the rest of the world.”

Though much of the new agreement mirrors NAFTA, it includes a section that allows more U.S. dairy exports to Canada — 3.6 percent of that nation’s market. It also requires Canada to scuttle its pricing rules that kept U.S. dairy products out of that market.

Canada will also allow more access to U.S. poultry and eggs, and British Columbia will sell U.S. wine at its government-owned liquor stores. At the same time, Mexico is opening the door to more U.S. cheese.

Second, the administration announced the signing of a revised trade agreement with South Korea. Called KORUS, the deal mainly focuses on the importation of automobiles between the two nations. But an important point to note is the sections related to U.S. agricultural exports to South Korea were not lost in the discussion. They remained intact.

That in itself is crucial for U.S. farmers and ranchers, who last year sold \$1.2 billion in beef, \$705 million in corn, \$490 million in fruit, \$475 million in pork and \$328 million in wheat to South Korean customers.

Third, and as importantly, President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced the beginning of talks aimed at a new bilateral trade agreement between their nations. Trump was following through on the promise he made when he scuttled U.S. participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement. Both Trump and his Democratic challenger, Hillary Clinton, had promised to toss that agreement on the trash heap.

The remaining 11 members of the TPP adopted the agreement without the U.S. That worried many U.S. farm groups, because Japan is a large customer of such commodities as corn, wheat and beef.

It’s been 20 months since Trump took the U.S. out of the TPP, and the delay made farmers nervous, as they saw TPP participants such as Canada and Australia preparing to enjoy low- and no-tariff access to Japanese customers. Not having any sort of trade deal with Japan, the fourth-largest foreign customer for U.S. farmers, would be costly. The top-selling U.S. ag goods in Japan last year were corn, at \$2.1



Clockwise from top: President Donald Trump shakes hands with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last week in New York, where they announced new bilateral trade talks. Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland points during a news conference. President Donald Trump points to a member of the media on Monday.

billion; beef and beef products, at \$1.9 billion; pork and pork products, at \$1.6 billion; soybeans, at \$947 million; and wheat, at \$713 million.

Trade deals cannot be negotiated overnight. A new agreement with Japan is likely to require a lot of give-and-take, as both nations are important customers of the other.

Having a trade agreement between the U.S. and Japan is

critical. We hope the deal will be far better than the TPP was for the U.S. — especially after Trump’s declarations that it couldn’t be worse.

In the meantime, the U.S. should be courting a lot of other nations and trade blocs. Our hope is last week was just the beginning of a lot of new announcements on trade talks and agreements.

YOUR VIEWS

Murdock an asset to county

I fully support George Murdock for re-election to county commissioner. I have known how much he has served the county: he balanced the budget, cut waste, and reached out to all sections of the county. His knowledge in county government is an asset we can’t afford to lose.

I urge you to support George Murdock for re-election.

Mark F. Gomolski
Hermiston

Walden should return to citizenry

In the past, I have happily cast ballots for Greg Walden. I was glad when he came to Congress, closing out the embarrassing Wes Cooley affair with the promise of sober, reasonable, and involved representation. Walden lived up to that promise for several terms, earning my vote the next November.

In recent years, though, something has changed; the involvement is gone. Walden seems to care more about raking in campaign cash and making House Speaker Paul Ryan happy than even meeting with his constituents. He has taken to sneaking in and out of places with the stealth of a ninja: a Rotary meeting here, a high-dollar fundraiser there, appearing and disappearing like an ill wind. Town hall meetings are announced with less than 36 hours’ notice, such as one in Boardman a few months ago, or they don’t happen at all.

Jamie McLeod-Skinner, on the other hand, has been parking her camper all over the 2nd District, talking with — and, more importantly, listening to — folks from every walk of life here, from farmers and ranchers in Pendleton to small business owners in John Day. She hears our stories



and considers how all stakeholders can be treated fairly in the public arena.

A congressman who seems to be afraid of his constituents cannot effectively represent them. Greg Walden needs to be forced to face his fear of private citizens by being returned to their proud ranks. Elect Jamie McLeod-Skinner to Congress.
Chris Early
Irrigon

Murdock makes tough decisions, gets results

As a veteran of 16 county budget cycles, I have a fairly good idea of some of the budget challenges Umatilla County has experienced over the years. The sheriff’s office had less than half of the patrol staff

that was needed for basic service, the jail had a cap of 132 inmates, all based on our budget. Fortunately, the patrol staff his increased dramatically and the jail cap is now 250.

This didn’t happen because all of a sudden Umatilla County fell into a large pool of money — it happened through making tough decisions on staffing levels, reorganization of county departments and good fiscal management.

It also didn’t happen until Commissioner George Murdock arrived on scene. If you look at his work history, you will find a person who has built his career on making the tough decisions and making good fiscal management a priority.

My decision to support Commissioner Murdock for re-election was easy; the county has benefited by his leadership. To continue in our growth, it’s extremely important he remains a member of the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners.

John Trumbo
Pendleton

Gomolski a man of the people

I support Mark Gomolski for city council. I have known Mark for over 30 years. He cares about people. He loves our Hermiston — that’s why I moved here. He is the right person for the job.

Vote for Mark for city council.

Samuel Hairston
Hermiston

A veteran’s reason for voting for Murdock

George Murdock has been a strong advocate for veterans in Umatilla County. He has doubled the number of veteran’s service officers, served on the Association of Oregon Counties Veterans Committee, fought for legislation to help provide services to veterans, and introduced the Hidden Heroes program to Oregon. The Hidden Heroes program focuses on caregivers for veterans.

He also chaired the celebration of WW II veterans of Umatilla County, and is leading the effort to honor our Korean War veterans in November.

He comes by his respect for Veterans honestly, since his father was a commander in the Navy and during WW II he and his mother lived all over the United States while his father served in the Bering Sea, the North Atlantic, and North Africa.

Tom Tangney
Korean War veteran
Pendleton

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