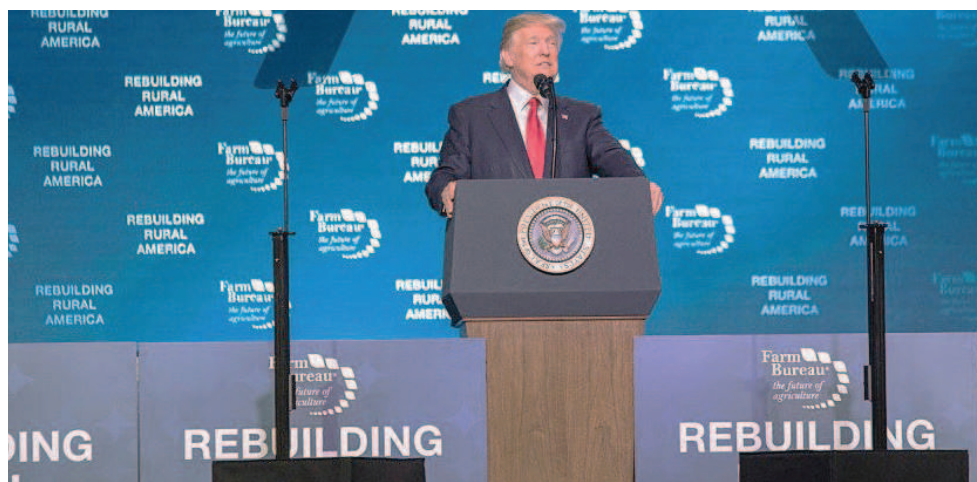


# Trump touts wall at Farm Bureau convention

By Mateusz Perkowski  
EO Media Group



Contributed photo/AFBF

**President Donald Trump addresses the 100th Annual American Farm Bureau Federation Convention in New Orleans on Jan. 14.**

Shortly after taking the podium at the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention, President Donald Trump asked the assembled farmers and ranchers to sit down.

If they remained standing for the duration of his speech, Trump said, the "fake news" would report that he hadn't received a single standing ovation.

"They can make anything you do look bad," he said.

The president need not have worried. His comments on a variety of topics, from border security to the farm bill, inspired the audience to get to its feet multiple times and engage in uproarious applause.

At the end, Trump praised the men and women in the crowd for working hard, respecting the American flag and teaching their children right from wrong.

"Now you have a government that is loyal to you, finally, in return," he said at the convention, which celebrated the AFBF's 100th year.

Much of Trump's Jan. 14 speech in New Orleans was devoted to the subject that has gripped the nation's attention in recent weeks: the proposed border wall and the associated partial government shutdown.

Trump emphasized the humanitarian concerns of migrants crossing the southern border as well as the national security risks.

A wall or barrier is needed to stop human traffickers who avoid normal ports of entry while transporting bound and gagged women, he said. "They drive right in and have no problem."

Due to the need for foreign labor in some agricultural sectors, Trump said he had no problem with immigrants coming in "legally through a process."

"You need people to help you with the farms, and I'm not going to rule that out," he said, adding that he aims to make it easier for guest-workers to enter the country.

Nonetheless, Trump criticized the "catch and

release" policy of allowing undocumented immigrants to stay in the U.S. while awaiting adjudication under immigration laws.

Only 2 to 3 percent of them bother showing up for the proceedings, he said. "Those people you almost don't want because they can't be very smart."

The president also complained that the governments of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala haven't done more to stop immigrant "caravans" from heading north even as these countries receive humanitarian aid from the U.S.

"Like so many nations, we help them, they don't help us," he said.

At one point, Trump invited Arizona rancher Jim Chilton to the stage, explaining that a border patrol agent was shot on his property along the Mexican border, which is used for drug smuggling.

Chilton said a border wall was not immoral, pointing to the wall surrounding the Vatican.

"Mr. President, we need a wall," Chilton said.

Trump mentioned other accomplishments of his administration — increasing the exemption to the federal estate tax, buttressing protections for growers in the farm bill and scaling back Clean Water Act jurisdiction over farmland — without dwelling on them at length.

"We're going to get the government off your back so you can make a living doing what you love," he said.

The president also addressed a subject that's

touchy for many farmers affected by retaliatory tariffs on their crops — the ongoing trade conflict with China.

The U.S. tariffs are necessary to resolve unfair practices on that country's part, such as stealing agricultural trade secrets and implementing "arbitrary" bans on U.S. farm products, he said.

Trump said he doesn't blame Chinese officials for policies that have resulted in a trade imbalance with the U.S.

"It's our fault for allowing it to happen," he said.

The audience cheered when Trump brought up his low approval ratings in the European Union, with which the U.S. also has trade tensions over steel and aluminum.

"I'm representing our country, I'm not representing those countries," he said.

As an example of what his trade approach could achieve, Trump touted the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA, which is intended to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Trump said he's confident the new agreement will be ratified by Congress.

"This landmark trade deal will increase exports of wheat from Montana, dairy from Wisconsin, chickens from Georgia and products from farmers and ranchers all across our country," he said.

Though farmers and ranchers clapped enthusiastically when Trump characterized his trade measures as an example of the U.S. standing up for itself, the

topic was discussed with less enthusiasm during other portions of the convention.

In welcoming the Farm Bureau to Louisiana, state officials noted the importance of trade to New Orleans, whose ports handle roughly 60 percent of U.S. grain exports.

"It's imperative we wrap this up so we have reliable markets for our ag products," said Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards.

Zippy Duvall, the Farm Bureau's president, commended the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill and the Trump administration's proposed revision of the "Waters of U.S." rules, which aim to reduce the federal government's Clean Water Act authority that had been expanded under Obama.

The agricultural community must defend the change from environmentalists who are "going to come out in force and try to defeat this new rule," Duvall said.

"Let's not lose this war in the last battle," he said.

Duvall also expressed gratitude for the USDA's tariff relief program for farmers, which helps mitigate the financial strain on farmers but "in no way makes us whole."

China's predatory trade tactics have hurt not only the U.S. but other countries, which is why the agriculture industry has been willing to stand behind the Trump administration's approach, he said.

However, the ability of farmers to withstand retaliatory tariffs is undermined by crop prices that were low

# Three weeks into shutdown, government weathering the storm

By Aubrey Wieber  
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon state government has yet to see deep impacts from a three-week federal government shutdown, but some Oregonians are feeling the pinch.

Saturday the shutdown became the longest in U.S. history at 22 days. With President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats unwilling to budge over funding for a wall on the southern border, there does not appear to be an easy exit in sight.

In late December, about a week into the shutdown, Elizabeth Craig, spokeswoman for the Oregon Department of Administrative Services, said state agencies that receive funding from their shuttered federal counterparts could weather the storm for about another week without making any adjustments.

But some federal payments have continued during the shutdown, and the state has reserves to keep others afloat. This week, Craig sent the Oregon Department of Administrative Services an update on agencies and programs that rely on federal dollars.

Craig has previously said the state would seek to recoup any extra money it has to shell out during the shutdown.

The partial government shutdown has frozen operations for the federal departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, State, Transportation and Treasury.

Some state programs should be fine through the federal fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, as long as the closed agencies keep making payments. Others could be impacted earlier, possibly at the end of the month.

One area of concern is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, also called welfare. That program provides cash payments for low-income families with children to pay for things like high rent costs.

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