The North American Free Trade Agreement must be replaced with a transparent trade agreement that ensures farmers in all three nations, Canada, Mexico and the United States, receive fair prices for their production, that consumers are guaranteed the right to know the content and origin of their food and that strong environmental protections are put in place to protect the sustainability of rural communities.

To give just one recent example of how rural communities suffer from reckless trade policies that promote corporate profit at the farmers expense, on April 1st of this year, Grassland Dairy Products, the nation’s largest butter maker, informed 75 Wisconsin dairy farmers, that as of May 1, their milk would no longer be permitted for processing. US processors, like Grassland, had been exploiting a loophole in the trade agreement that allowed them to ship ultra-filtered milk to Canadian cheese plants as tariff free; since it was classified as an “ingredient” at the border. Once it arrived at the plants its classification was changed to ‘dairy’ to legally meet Canada’s cheese production standards.

Canada imposed new taxes on imports, as Trump has recently placed on Canadian softwood lumber, they simply created a new “class” of milk that is priced at the world market price, just as the US imports were. Given this price equalization, Canadian cheese makers can now buy Canadian milk.

Ironically enough, Grassland has also been bankrupting the 5,000 cow factory farm expansion of Cranberry Creek Dairy in Dunn County to further flood the domestic milk market. And as noted by Darin Von Rueden, President of Wisconsin Farmers Union, Grassland was cutting its milk purchases as part of the plan to build this corporate-owned 5,000 cow dairy.

NAFTA needs to be replaced, not renegotiated. The Following principles should guide any new U.S. trade policy for North American Agriculture

1. Restore Local and National Sovereignty over Farm and Food Policy
   • Restore Country-of-Origin Meat Labels (COOL)
   • Reject New Proposals that undermine state and local authorities to determine the best rules for their communities.
   • NAFTA countries should advocate revisions in the rules at the WTO AoA to protect the right of each country to establish policies with respect to food.

2. Stop Corporate Giveaways in Trade Agreements
   • Remove ISDS provisions in NAFTA and other trade agreements
   • Reject intellectual property rights and other provisions that limit farmer’s ability to save and share seeds and strengthen the power of seed companies.
   • Reject new proposals in TPP that speed up rules on approval of agricultural biotechnology products in ways that bypass national efforts to assess their safety, effectiveness and impact on rural communities.

3. Ensure Economic Viability and Resilience in Rural Communities
   • Apply existing laws to prevent dumping. The United States has several tools to prevent unfair imports.
   • Protect the rights of farmworkers to decent wages and working conditions. One of consequences of the devastation of Mexican farming communities under NAFTA has been the increase in migration to the U.S. where farm workers often labor under precarious conditions. New rules should be established that generate rural jobs in all three countries and that protect farmworkers’ labor and other human rights.

The basic human rights of farm workers, fair wages and working conditions, must be protected by trade rules that support jobs and rural development in all three countries. Food is a human right, food sovereignty cannot be compromised by trade agreements designed by corporate interests. All nations have a right to decide what they will eat, how it will be grown and who will control it. No one should be forced to accept agricultural products they do not want.

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