



Contact: Chris Palmquist, 712-242-6090
cpalmquist@iatp.org

July 11, 2019
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEARLY 60 FARM AND FOOD GROUPS URGE CONGRESS TO REJECT NEW USMCA

The updated trade deal will lock in rules that have devastated family farms and expanded corporate control over agriculture and food in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

WASHINGTON—The current version of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) must be rejected, as it ignores the fundamental shortcomings of its predecessor—the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—and will lock in trade rules that have devastated family farms and expanded corporate control in agriculture and food, according to 59 organizations. These groups, including family farm, ranching, local food, public health and sustainable agriculture organizations, [delivered a letter to Congress](#) on Wednesday urging a reworked trade agreement to serve the interests of farmers, consumers and the environment in all three nations.

Since NAFTA's implementation, nearly 250,000 small to medium scale farmers have been driven out of agriculture. According to the [United States International Trade Commission's report](#) on the economic benefits of USMCA, agriculture will grow by just 1,700 jobs over the full period of its implementation.

While family farmers are and will be crushed, global agribusiness is thriving. The USMCA serves as a deregulatory wishlist for business, enacting new obstacles toward the enacting of sensible rules on food safety, agricultural biotechnology, food labeling and pesticide usage. Within USMCA's framework, regulators must choose the option that least disrupts trade, rather than what protects farmers and workers, our water or our health.

Like its predecessor, the New NAFTA largely benefits agribusiness companies that operate in the United States, Canada and Mexico at the expense of family farms, consumers and the environment. USMCA must be rejected and reworked to serve the interests of the people of all three nations.

COMMENTS FROM SIGNATORIES:

Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director, [Food and Water Watch](#): "Congress must not approve NAFTA 2.0. This new version of a damaging trade deal would weaken our food safety standards, undermine many U.S. farmers raising crops like tomatoes and strawberries and promote unsustainable GMO crops."

Jim Goodman, President, [National Family Farm Coalition](#): "Nearly a quarter of a million family farmers have gone out of business since the original NAFTA was signed in 1994. As agribusiness has consolidated, multinational corporations have increased their

IATP.ORG

2105 FIRST AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404
(612) 870-0453

110 MARYLAND AVE NE, SUITE 307
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002
(202) 543-8602

profit margins while farmers sink deeper into debt and rural communities have withered. The new USMCA promises to accelerate these trends. Congress should reject this proposal and instead insist on trade rules that will be fair to family farmers, workers, and consumers."

Karen Hansen-Kuhn, Director of Trade and Global Governance, [Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy](#): "Many of our organizations pushed for changes in USMCA, beginning with restoring Country of Origin Labeling for meat. But those proposals were ignored. The New NAFTA does nothing to address the changes family farmers have been demanding for decades, nothing to improve farm incomes, and nothing to lift prices. Instead, it locks in a corporate-friendly status quo that will only lead to more crises in the future."

#####

Based in Minneapolis with offices in Washington, D.C., and Berlin, Germany, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems.