

Press Background Document on Farmer Roundtable and Executive Order Signing

Farmer Roundtable

- Tuesday, April 25, 3:00 – 4:00 PM
- Roosevelt Room
- 15 farmers from around the United States, including:
 - Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue
 - Lisa Johnson-Billy, farmer and former OK House member, Lindsay, OK
 - Luke Brubaker, Brubaker Farms, Mount Joy, PA
 - Hank Choate, Choate's Belly Acres, Cement City, MI
 - Tom Demaline, Willoway Nurseries, Avon, OH
 - Zippy Duval, President of American Farm Bureau Federation and a farmer from Greensboro, GA
 - Valerie Early, National FFA Central Region Vice President and former 4-H member, Wykoff, MN
 - Lynetta Usher Griner, Usher Land and Timber, Inc., Fanning Springs, FL (also farms in the state of KS)
 - A.G. Kawamura, Orange County Produce, Newport Beach, CA
 - James Lamb, Lamb Farms and Prestage Farms, Clinton, NC
 - Bill Northey, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture and farmer, Spirit Lake, IA
 - Jose Rojas, VP of Farm Operations for Hormel, Colorado Springs, CO
 - Terry Swanson, Swanson Farms, Walsh, CO
 - Maureen Torrey, Torrey Farms, Elba, NY
 - Steve Troxler, NC Commissioner of Agriculture and farmer, Browns Summit, NC
- While less than 1% of the American population is engaged directly in farming, agriculture and agribusiness are top industries in an overwhelming majority of states.
- American farmers are the most efficient in the world and their productivity is the main reason Americans spend a lower percentage of their income on food than residents of any other country.
- Topics likely to arise include: agricultural trade, regulatory reform, rural investment and infrastructure, the Farm Bill, and agricultural labor.

Executive Order

The EO acknowledges that a reliable, safe, and affordable food, fiber, and forestry supply is critical to America's national security, stability, and prosperity.

The EO also establishes an interagency task force to be chaired by Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. The task force is ordered to identify legislative, regulatory, or policy changes to promote American agriculture, economic development, job growth, infrastructure improvements, technological innovation, energy security, and quality of life in rural America. The report from the task force is due within 180 days.

The EO also sunsets the White House Rural Council. While the Rural Council was noble in purpose, it appears that most of its work was informal and did not focus specifically on economic growth in agriculture or rural America. The Task Force will certainly examine whether a structure like the Rural Council would be useful following the 180-day review.