

“Enough is Enough,” by Dr. Chris Jones

Arkansans are being hurt by Farm Service Agency cuts and by tariffs.

In just a few weeks, Arkansas farmers will begin planting their crops. This window is their shot to get seeds in the ground, and if they miss it, **there is no income— and bankruptcy becomes a real possibility.**

Yet, just 30 days before planting begins, **the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is cutting staff**, delaying essential loans, crop insurance approvals, and disaster assistance. They have cut staff because the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) decided that these support to farmers are not needed.

But the truth is, these supports are very much needed. Arkansas farmers depend on FSA programs to stay in business. Farmers partner with FSA in several ways, including:

- **Operating Loans:** Many farmers take out FSA-backed loans to buy seed, fertilizer, and equipment. Without these loans, planting doesn’t happen.
- **Crop Insurance:** FSA helps farmers secure insurance to protect against extreme weather but delays in approvals could leave them financially exposed.
- **Disaster Assistance:** Spring floods and storms are common in Arkansas. If disaster aid is delayed, some farmers won’t recover in time to plant.

As if FSA cuts were not enough, President Donald Trump is pushing for more tariffs—not just on China, but on Mexico and Canada as well. Just this week, the stock market dropped after the start of new tariffs on these countries. These tariffs will almost certainly lead **to retaliatory counter-tariffs**, making it harder for Arkansas’ rice, soybean, and poultry farmers to sell their products abroad. That means **lower revenue for farmers, fewer crops in the field, and higher grocery bills for everyone.**

When tariffs go up, and these countries retaliate, just as they have before, it will mean:

- **Soybean prices could crash again**, just like in 2018 when China responded to Trump’s tariffs by cutting U.S. soybean purchases.
- **Rice farmers could lose critical export markets again**, putting further financial pressure on Arkansas agriculture.

- **Food grain prices will climb again** as supply chains tighten, making already high grocery prices even worse.

We will all pay for this at the checkout line.

But here is a core question: where is Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders while all of this is happening?

She has a close personal relationship with the president—one she has never hesitated to highlight. If ever there were a time to use that influence, it's now. She should be demanding full FSA staffing so farmers can access the loans and insurance they need before it's too late. She should be pushing back against reckless tariffs that threaten Arkansas agriculture so that Arkansans can have just a little less stress.

But instead? She's silent.

Farmers can't afford delays. Families can't afford higher food prices. Arkansans deserve better.

Call the Governor's office, since she has a direct line to the President. Let her know that she can and should advocate on your behalf. Her ignoring it isn't helping you.

Call your Congressional Representatives, since they control the Federal budget. Let them know that they need to stop voting for policies that hurt Arkansans.

Show up at their Town Halls and make your voice heard. Tell them that enough is enough.

Share your thoughts and comments at chrisjoneslistens@gmail.com.