



The unified voice of Whatcom Family Farmers
PO Box 326 | Lynden, WA | 98264

October 17, 2017

Representative Dan Newhouse
1318 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Newhouse:

We were pleased to see your support for our family farmers in your letter of September 20 to Ambassador Lighthizer, the US Trade Representative. We fully support your efforts to retain access to foreign markets, but we are writing to bring your attention to existing inequities in US trade laws that are threatening the future of farmers across the US who grow labor intensive specialty fruit and vegetable products.

[The October 7 Wall Street Journal included a report](#) that succinctly summarizes the problem. Mexican imports of small fruit such as raspberries, blueberries and strawberries have increased fivefold in the last decade. State subsidies and significant differences in food safety and environmental regulations means that Mexican berries are sold in the US for well below American production costs. Farmers in our state pay approximately \$200 per day for labor while in Mexico farm workers earn about \$11 per day. Other countries such as Serbia and China also pay farmworkers considerably less than US domestic and guest workers are paid.

We are grateful that Eric Wilkinson of KING5 also effectively covered this issue. Please watch the second video in this report as fourth generation Whatcom berry farmer Marty Maberry explains exactly the reasons why changes in our trade agreements are needed.

<http://www.king5.com/news/local/for-washington-farmers-nafta-isnt-apples-to-apples/479680747>

Farmers are very concerned about providing good pay and working conditions for our farmworkers as well as caring for the environment and ensuring safe, high quality food. While farmers are struggling to pay farmworkers twenty times what their competitors are paying, labor union organizers are unfairly attacking our farmers who use the H2A guest worker program. They are falsely claiming inadequate pay and working conditions, even blaming a farmer for the death of a worker who died of natural causes. Media and political support for the protests staged by the union organizers puts further pressure on farmers.

The future of our multi-generation small fruit farms is at stake. We urgently ask for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad Rader". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brad" and the last name "Rader" clearly distinguishable.

Brad Rader
President Whatcom Family Farmers