

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Sam Watson and I co-own and operate Chill C Farms in Moultrie, Georgia. We are a grower, shipper, packer of just over 500 acres of southern vegetables. We employ 10 full time employees and over 100 seasonal employees. I am submitting these comments in hopes that the United States Trade Office and its partners will work diligently to solve the problem of foreign fruit and vegetable products being dumped into the US market at an exponential rate. The southeastern growers have lobbied extremely hard over the last several years to slow down the renewal of USMCA. Ultimately, we were overpowered by much larger corporate growers who have realized they can grow or buy fruits and vegetables much cheaper in foreign countries such as Mexico. These foreign countries have cheap labor, no regulatory environment and the government is subsidizing many of the farmers. When you combine all these advantages, I find it hard to believe that anyone can say the American farmers participate in fair trade.

All the American fruit and vegetable farmer asked for was an opportunity to have a level playing field. Why did automobile manufactures get exemptions or changes to their favor? So, they could stay in business and make more money. Obviously, there were similar issues they fought for and got a minimum wage requirement no matter where the automobile was built. Hmm, why was that? I have heard it said, "USMCA does no harm to American farmers," but yet I would suggest that statement should be restated to say, "it's good for some farmers just not American fruit and vegetable growers". It may be good for corn, wheat, cotton or soybean farmers, but they don't have labor issues like vegetable growers. So again I ask, why were American farmers not given some kind of exemption on labor? Why would this administration treat the auto industry different than agriculture? Last time I checked automobiles cost more and more every year, but food stays the same price. I sold squash this year for same price I sold it for 13 years ago. All we asked for was a level playing field but never even got to the batter's box.

Now, to make these comments even more alarming let's add drug trafficking to the conversation. How many loads of vegetables are crossing the US border from Mexico containing drugs on an annual basis? Anyone keeping up with that? I read everyday about shipments of produce coming into this country with illegal drugs hidden within the shipment. Those are the ones we catch, how many more get in that we do not know about? Drugs have also entered the USMCA discussion. The increasing shipments of produce coming across creates more work for our already overworked and understaffed US Customs and Border Patrol agents who fight everyday to protect Americans. As trade increases in volume it only makes sense to think the bad guys are at an even greater advantage. The more they push across the less likely they get caught. I guess that's why the President signed the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019 because he knows we need more inspectors to protect our food supply.

Lastly, as a 5th generation farmer I feel certain that due to these unfair practices I will be the last generation of farmers in my family. The outlook for a American vegetable grower is grim, and that is a direct effect of our trade policies. I would love for this office to change my mind and share some

encouraging news. Otherwise, concerns of shortages of medical masks and medicine will pale in comparison to serious shortage of food, if you don't change our trade policies that is exactly what our Country will experience when all of your domestic fruit and vegetable growers are gone and we are totally dependent on foreign nations for our fruits and vegetables.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns,