

Viewpoints: yours & ours

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM OUR READERS

Farms need support

As a proud asparagus grower in Mears, Michigan, my family has worked to provide safe, local and healthy food for our communities for 56 years over four generations. Unfortunately, I'm not sure how much longer we'll be able to continue to grow this crop on our farm with outdated government policies pushing us and many other fruit and vegetable growers out of business throughout Michigan and in states across the country. It also means Americans will be importing even more of our fruits and vegetables from Mexico and Central and South America.

Michigan's fruit and veg-

etable industry represents nearly \$6 billion dollars and more than 40,000 jobs to the Michigan economy - losing it has real, local, consequences. Our farm is watching updates to the labor and regulatory policy to make the determination of planting next year. Due to the current conditions our farm has not planted more asparagus acreage for 2 years. This means that our farm is getting smaller, and our production is declining. The need for helpful policy change has become urgent and immediate.

Our farm has made several improvements to improve the overall efficiency and sustainability to produce quality asparagus. We are at the point where there are no additional ways to trim the cost of production on our farm, and all the regulatory burden is placed directly on our bottom line. Farming is our family business, but a business must make a profit for it to exist.

Once this land is gone, it doesn't come back. This is so much more than an ag issue - it's a national food security issue. Do we want to forfeit the produce industry, or do something to save it?

We must help our elected officials in Washington understand that the time to act is now. If we don't do something soon, we'll continue to lose the production of fruit and vegetables to foreign countries.

The time is now to Protect Our Produce.

Jordon Walsworth, PE
Golden Stock Farms, LLC
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