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Water floods a cornfield in Malden, Ill., in late May. (Daniel Acker/Bloomberg News)

Farmers could see a minimum of \$15 an acre to offset corn, soybean and other crop losses in latest trade bailout plan

U.S. farmers would get a minimum of \$15 per acre in the latest round of assistance to growers slammed by ongoing trade disputes with China and other countries.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said Tuesday direct payments to farmers will be provided in three rounds, with half of the total assistance provided in the first checks.

Farmers can expect "about 50% or a minimum there of \$15 an acre initially" under the new \$16 billion trade mitigation plan, Perdue said.

USDA will assess market conditions before releasing the remaining assistance, he said. [Read More](#)

Grassley: USDA should limit farm bill payments to growers with 'dirt under their fingernails'

U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley wants the federal government to limit payments under the 2018 farm bill to growers with "dirt under their fingernails."

Grassley, an Iowa Republican, said Tuesday he only wants checks going to people "who are actively engaged in farming."

"For me, that probably means they ought to have dirt under their fingernails," he told reporters in a call. "If it's something less than that, we need to know that they're actively engaged" in farming. [Read More](#)

U.S. farmers stalk fraudulent imports to save their markets

The massive freighter left a port on the coast of Turkey in April, bound for the United States with a cargo of grain for farmers to feed to organic livestock.

From a desk at his farm in rural Wisconsin, John Bobbe was suspicious.

He wasn't convinced that the cargo of the M.V. Andalucia, en route from the Black Sea to North Carolina, was legitimate. The ship's itinerary, the owner of the grain, and the fact that the European Union had stopped recognizing the grain's likely organic certifier stoked his doubts. He fired an e-mail to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as he has done often over the past four years trying to turn back a rising tide of counterfeit imported organic grain.

"This thing gets more bizarre as you go along," Bobbe said. "The problem is that consumers are being potentially defrauded, and the price for farmers is going down."

Sales of organic food have more than doubled in the United States in the past 10 years, to \$48 billion a year, but U.S. acreage devoted to organic grain has not kept up. Less than 1% of row crops in the country are certified organic, so U.S. organic grain farmers can't produce enough feed for the animals that supply organic eggs, milk and meat. [Read More](#)

Agriculture Secretary Perdue: Food stamps must go to those who truly need them – but let's cut out the waste.

As Secretary of Agriculture, I am proud to work with the thousands of employees who administer the nutrition programs that provide for Americans who are most in need. However, states are taking advantage of loopholes that allow millions of people to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, commonly known as food stamps, who would otherwise not qualify. It is my job to ensure the people who truly need food stamps receive what they're entitled to – but the waste must stop.

Food stamps provide essential benefits to ensure folks facing the loss of a job or other difficult circumstances can put food on the table. The beauty of our system is the Federal Government delegates power to states who are closer to the people and are responsible for delivering benefits, with some discretion and flexibility in how they do so. However, too often, States have misused this flexibility and without restraint, expanded the number of people they serve. [Read More](#)

Midwestern farmers' struggles with extreme weather are visible from space

From space, the U.S. Midwest is more brown belt than farm belt right now.

At this time of year, a band of deep Kelly green should spread from Ohio to North Dakota as corn and soybeans race to pack on size before they pollinate and bear fruit. But 2019's unprecedented rains have uprooted the typical course of events. Some crops are waterlogged and stunted. Others won't be planted at all.

Unplanted, drowned or late fields have two things in common: They look brown from space, and they mean farmers will probably harvest less corn and soybeans this year than they had planned.

Some farms were devastated by the deluge, particularly smaller family operations that lacked insurance coverage and those that were washed out by flooded rivers. But thanks to a recovery in commodity prices and what University of Illinois economist Scott Irwin estimated will be a \$20 billion infusion of federal money, those that are not knocked out by this perilous planting season are likely to come out of the disaster ahead. [Read More](#)