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Tariffs pose major threat to U.S. farmers' markets



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U.S. row crop farmers, who rely heavily on international markets for their survival, are facing significant challenges as President Trump's tariffs impact both supply costs and export demand. With soaring costs for essential farm inputs like tractors, seed, and fertilizer, many farmers are feeling the pressure.

Vance Ehmke, a western Kansas farmer, expressed his frustrations: "These tariffs are just absolutely bad news. They cause the prices for everything that we buy to go up, and the price for everything that we sell to go down."

The price of wheat, a key crop for many, has been volatile. Ehmke reported that prices dropped significantly after Trump's tariff threats, leading to a financial hit of up to \$40,000. Large-scale farmers like Ehmke depend on global markets, with nearly half of his wheat sold overseas.

Retaliatory tariffs from other countries are feared to worsen this, reducing demand and driving prices even lower.

Farm trade associations, such as the American Farm Bureau Federation, also voiced concerns.

President Zippy Duvall warned that tariffs would raise the cost of supplies and make U.S. products more expensive globally, risking long-term damage to market share. With more than 20% of farm income coming from exports, losing markets could take decades to recover.

The ongoing trade conflict has already pushed some countries to explore alternatives. Kenneth Hartman Jr., a corn and soybean farmer, expressed concern that Mexico, a major export partner, might look to Brazil or Argentina for corn, further shrinking U.S. market share.

Though some farmers hope Trump's strategy will open new markets in Asia, the administration's tariffs on Vietnam and the Philippines could complicate efforts. In past trade wars, the government offered \$28 billion in aid to farmers, but many, like Ehmke, are skeptical about future relief.

For now, U.S. farmers are stuck in a turbulent trade environment, unsure of what the future holds.