



Newsmax OpEd | John Rich | Protect American Family Farmers | April 30, 2024

As an American musician, I may not be your typical voice in the political arena, but as a proud advocate for the American family farmer and rancher, and a grandson of a Texas panhandle farmer, I feel compelled to speak out against the so-called Ending Agriculture Trade Suppression (EATS) Act, H.R. 4417/S. 2019, led by Rep. Ashley Hinson, R-Iowa, and Sen. Roger Marshall, R-Kan., and other legislation like it that House Agriculture Committee Members plan to include in the upcoming Farm Bill. This proposed legislation threatens the very livelihoods of hardworking individuals who form the backbone of our nation's agricultural industry.

First and foremost, let's acknowledge the immense contribution of American farmers and ranchers to our economy and way of life. These men and women break their backs day in and day out to provide us with the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the fuel that powers our nation. They deserve our unwavering support and protection.

EATS, however, poses a serious threat to the prosperity of American agriculture, and the safety and security of our food production. EATS would dismantle critical state and local laws that protect family farmers. Additionally, it's an assault on states' rights and an affront to those who are working to prevent our enemies abroad from taking further control of American food production even further than they already have. The legislation jeopardizes the viability of family farms and ranches across America, giving preference to foreign multinational conglomerates like the Communist Chinese-owned Smithfield who owns one in every six sows in the United States.

It's also worth noting that the purchase of Smithfield during the Obama Administration back in 2013 was financed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). We cannot allow foreign competitors to undercut American producers by exploiting lower labor and production standards, and we must not allow them to take a wrecking ball to state laws enacted by voters at the ballot box.

EATS, and other legislation like it is opposed by more than 2,000 groups, businesses, and organizations like FreedomWorks, Moms for America, the National Governors Association, the Organization for Competitive Markets, the American Grassfed Association, R-CALF USA, Republican Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller, and more than 100 farms in my home State of Tennessee.

Numerous Republican Members of Congress have voiced their opposition to EATS and the nullification of state agriculture laws. Last Oct. 16, House Republicans voiced their opposition to EATS in a letter to House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn Rep. "G.T." Thompson, R-PA, and Ranking Member Rep. David Scott, D-Ga.

Fox News reported that Rep. Anna Paulina Luna, R-Fla., a staunch conservative in her own right, recently led a letter signed by House Freedom Caucus Chairman Bob Good, R-Va., as well as Reps. Byron Donalds, R-Fla., Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., Nancy Mace, R-S.C., Andy Biggs, R-Ariz., Matt Rosendale, R-Montana, Jeff Van Drew, R-N.J., and Tim Burchett, R-Tenn., against China's EATS Act that stated the current "level of foreign control" in U.S. pork production is "unprecedented in any other sector of American agriculture."

Our farmers and ranchers adhere to some of the most stringent regulations in the world, ensuring that the food we consume is safe, nutritious, and responsibly produced. EATS would effectively level the playing field not by raising standards globally, but by lowering them domestically and federalizing those lower standards.

If the Chinese get what they want, there will be giant factory-farmed 'hog hotels' across the landscape in rural America. China has a shortage of farm land and they want to take ours so they can raise and ship more pork back to Beijing. The question should be asked: Are they stockpiling food for their armies? We would be foolish to think otherwise.

I urge policymakers to reconsider their support for the EATS Act, and reject this proposal that only serves to strengthen and benefit the CCP. Let's stand united in support of American food production and reject shortsighted proposals that undermine the hard work and dedication of our farmers and ranchers.



John Rich is a lifelong conservative, one-half of the Big and Rich duo, and a member of the board of directors at Moms for America. He resides in Nashville, Tennessee.