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U.S.-Japan Agreement Good News for Montana Farmers

Great Falls – The tariff agreement signed today by U.S. President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe is a most welcome deal that will keep grain exports flowing to a very large and crucial market for Montana farmers.

MGGA President Lyle Benjamin said, “This is excellent news for Montana farmers who sell the majority of their wheat to our long-standing customers in Japan. We very much appreciate the diligent efforts of our congressional representatives for pressing the administration on the importance of a trade agreement with Japan. Their work behind the scenes was crucial in achieving this outcome.”

Congressman Greg Gianforte said, “The new trade deal with Japan is a win for Montana farmers and ranchers. The deal President Trump struck with Japan ensures Montana’s high-quality ag products have access to that critical market. I proudly stood with and advocated for Montana’s wheat and barley growers, and I appreciate the administration including in the agreement my request to secure equitable market access for Montana wheat.”

“Today’s announcement is a big win for Montana ag and jobs, and a major step forward for opening critical markets for our producers,” Senator Steve Daines said. “It has been a privilege to be the voice of Montana’s farmers and ranchers during trade negotiations between the U.S. and Japan. I’m happy to see President Trump and Prime Minister Abe announce they reached a deal that will help level the playing field for Montana farmers and ranchers. I look forward to seeing the final agreement signed in the coming weeks.”

Senator Jon Tester said, “This is welcome news for Montana’s farmers and ranchers, who rely on access to foreign markets like Japan to sell their world-class products. Japan is the largest importer of Montana’s wheat, and plays a critical role in our state’s number one industry. I look forward to seeing the finalized details of the deal, and I hope it means the Trump Administration will see the wisdom of expanding access to foreign markets instead of closing them off.”

When the tariff agreement is implemented, Japan’s effective tariff on imported U.S. wheat and barley will drop to the same level Japanese end users now pay for those crops imported from other countries in the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) agreement which entered into force last December. Without this new agreement, U.S. wheat imports in particular would have become less and less cost competitive to the point that Japan’s flour millers would have no other choice than to buy more of the lower cost wheat from our competitors in Canada and Australia.

The Montana Grain Growers Association is the primary trade organization representing Montana wheat and barley producers who, by combining their strengths, voices, and ideas, are working to insure a better future for themselves, their industry and the consumer.

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