

“We Can’t Give Our Product Away” – Farmers Dump Thousands Of Acres Of Produce and Surplus Milk



Thousands of acres of fruits and vegetables grown in Florida are being plowed over or left to rot because farmers who had grown the crops to sell to restaurants or other hospitality-industry buyers like theme parks and schools have been left on the hook for the crops. Many companies in the US that still need such produce have contracts with foreign suppliers. Many farmers cannot even donate the food to food banks because the pantries are fully stocked. -GEG

As some misguided liberals complain about fruits “left rotting on the trees” because Trump’s immigration crackdown has left no undocumented migrants to pick the vegetables (a demonstrably false assumption), the Associated Press has offered an explanation for this phenomenon that also illustrates how disruptions in the businesses like the hospitality and food-service industry work their way through the supply chain, ultimately sticking farmers in the American Farm Belt with fields of vegetables that they can’t sell, or even donate as local food pantries are now full-up with donations from restaurants.

The AP started its story in Palmetto, Fla. a city in Manatee County on the Gulf Coast, where a farmer had dumped piles of zucchini and other fresh vegetables to rot.

As the AP reported, thousands of acres of fruits and vegetables grown in Florida are being plowed over or left to rot because farmers who had grown the crops to sell to restaurants or other hospitality-industry buyers like theme parks and schools have been left on the hook for the crops.

As the economy shuts down across the country, injecting what the Fed described as massive levels of uncertainty, farmers in the state are now begging Ag Secretary Sonny Purdue to get some of that farm bailout money. Without some kind of industry-specific bailout, these farmers might go out of business.

The problem – in a nutshell – is that these farmers have longstanding sales relationships, but suddenly, those customers have disappeared. And many other companies in the US that are still buying produce already have contracts with foreign suppliers.

It would be great if Trump could come in with agricultural tariffs that would effectively cut off foreign competition, but such a move would likely be widely panned by the establishment, who would sooner watch every small farmer commit hari-kari than see continued pullback in globalization and more limits on free trade.

“We gave 400,000 pounds of tomatoes to our local food banks,” DiMare said. “A million more pounds will have to be donated if we can get the food banks to take it.”

Farmers are scrambling to sell to grocery stores, but it’s not easy. Large chains already have contracts with farmers who grow for retail – many from outside the U.S.

“We can’t even give our product away, and we’re allowing imports to come in here,” DiMare said.

He said 80 percent of the tomatoes grown in Florida are meant for now-shuttered restaurants and theme parks.

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