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The Des Moines Register

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Farmers get \$16 billion in aid

Iowa estimated to lose \$2 billion annually from trade disputes

Donnelle Eller and Stephen Gruber-Miller
 Des Moines Register
 USA TODAY NETWORK

The federal government will send another round of aid — \$16 billion — to help farmers reeling financially by President Donald Trump’s ongoing trade war with China.

The trade assistance package would

send \$14.5 billion in direct payments to farmers, U.S. Department of Agriculture leaders said Thursday.

The president knows “that because of the agricultural trade surplus, our farmers, producers and ranchers will bear the brunt of these trade disputes disproportionately,” said Sonny Perdue, the U.S. agriculture secretary.

“I cannot recall a president that’s been

more concerned about farmer and agricultural well-being and long-term profitability than President Trump,” Perdue said.

It’s an important announcement for Iowa, which is estimated to lose \$2 billion annually from ongoing trade disputes with China, Mexico, Canada, Europe and other countries.

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The “announcement of additional trade aid assistance for U.S. farmers recognizes the severe economic damage being done because of the ongoing trade war.”

Lindsay Greiner
 Grows soybeans near Keota

Reader’s Watchdog
 Lee Rood
 Des Moines Register
 USA TODAY NETWORK

Condo owners desperate for answers

Residents haven’t been home since 2018 fire

From the beginning, all Nanette LaVia and her neighbors wanted to know was who’s responsible for the mess and when they could move back in.

Fire destroyed one of four buildings at Plumwood Terrace Condominiums in Urbandale on New Year’s Day 2018. LaVia and 35 neighbors, many of them elderly or disabled, have been living in rentals ever since.

After almost a year of building delays, the residents thought they were finally going to be able to move back in before Christmas this year.

But they learned this month their new building has serious structural issues. If a plan to raise the building and fix it using a hydraulic lift fails, they’ve been told contractors may have to tear it down and start over.

LaVia contacted Watchdog, saying residents haven’t been getting straight answers for a long time from their homeowners association board.

Even before the structural debacle, her distress heightened to the point that she decided to file a civil lawsuit last December alleging negligence against the association and board president, Scott Caldwell. That trial isn’t scheduled until next spring.

“We’re just really tired of being screwed around,” she said. “It’s like we

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IOWA CAUCUSES 2020

DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES SLAM MCDONALD’S OVER PAY



Protesters hold signs and chant outside of the McDonald’s on Merle Hay Road in Des Moines on Thursday during a rally calling for a \$15 minimum hourly wage. Protests were held across the country. KELSEY KREMER/DES MOINES REGISTER

Protests across country target chain

Kim Norvell Des Moines Register
and Aamer Madhani USA Today
 USA TODAY NETWORK

Democratic presidential candidates are blasting fast-food giant McDonald’s for paying its workers “unjust and unsustainable” and “starvation” wages.

White House hopefuls — including Sen. Bernie Sanders, Julian Castro, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, and Washington Gov. Jay Inslee — joined demonstrations in 13 cities, targeting the world’s most powerful restaurant chain over wages and working conditions.

In Des Moines, de Blasio joined more than 100 Iowa protesters.

“I came here to tell people it can be done, because it has been done. We did in New York, and it worked,” de Blasio said. “This is one of the most important places where this fight is being fought. The eyes of the nation are on Iowa right now.”

The protesters and the presidential candidates who took part across the nation Thursday called on the Chicago-

See **WAGES**, Page 14A

USA TODAY

A massive twister that tore through Jefferson City, Missouri, overnight Wednesday into Thursday touched off a “chaotic situation” that left 20 people injured. **6A**

Weather

High 79° ■ Low 63°
 Showers. Forecast, **5A**

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