

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
KENT A. LEONHARDT



304-558-3550

agriculture.wv.gov



Facebook: West Virginia Department of Agriculture



Twitter: @WVDeptofAg

NEWS RELEASE
January 9, 2018

Contact: Crescent Gallagher
Communications Director
304/558-3708; 304/380-3922 (cell)
cgallagher@wvda.us

COMMISSIONER LEONHARDT COMMENDS PRESIDENT TRUMP AND USDA RURAL PROSPERITY REPORT

Charleston, W.Va. – Following the release of the *Taskforce on Agriculture Rural Prosperity Report*, West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt released the following statement.

“You have to commend this administration for going out and talking to rural America. We know areas like West Virginia are struggling, but there had not been a coordinated effort like this from our federal government,” said Commissioner Leonhardt. “The report by the USDA, as charged by President Trump, is a step in the right direction.”

The report, released by USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue during the 2018 American Farm Bureau Conference, highlights five calls to action. These include: connectivity for rural America, improving the quality of life, supporting a rural workforce, harnessing technological innovations and developing the rural economy. The report pushes for reducing regulations, expanding vocational education and utilizing natural resources among other policies.

“I am glad to see veterans and vocational education were included in the report, as well as access to broadband. Those are things we have been promoting from the state level. If we are ever going to turn rural America around, we need to think outside the box,” continued Leonhardt. “I am eager to see the policies from the report put into action.”

USDA’s report was developed by engaging Legislators, stakeholders, state and local governments, as well as federal agencies for input over the last six months. Secretary Perdue visited West Virginia last September as part of the task force’s listening tour. During that visit, Commissioner Leonhardt hosted a round table with state leaders to discuss issues facing West Virginia. A tour of the Green Mining project, an effort to grow lavender on a post mine site, followed.

For full access to report, click here: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/rural-prosperity-report.pdf>.