

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture  
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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE KENT LEONHARDT PRAISES  
CONFIRMATION OF USDA SECRETARY SONNY PERDUE**

**Charleston, W.Va.** – West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt congratulates Sonny Perdue upon his confirmation as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture by the United States Senate.

"This is a crucial time for agriculture in West Virginia and the United States as a whole. With the right policies and enthusiasm, we can grow agriculture and expand opportunities for our farmers," said Commissioner Leonhardt. "We look forward to working with Secretary Perdue to strengthen our partnerships and collaborations with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)."

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) receives approximately \$19 million from the USDA through grants and collaborative agreements. These monies are used to fund programs such as Specialty Crop Block Grants, inspection of slaughter facilities and initiatives that help protect our state and national forests.

"For example, Specialty Crop Block Grants have allowed the WVDA to help facilitate growth in our maple syrup industry," stressed Commissioner Leonhardt. "We've gone from a few small producers to a booming industry that's attracting attention from around the world. We would not have seen this kind of success without support from the USDA."

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