

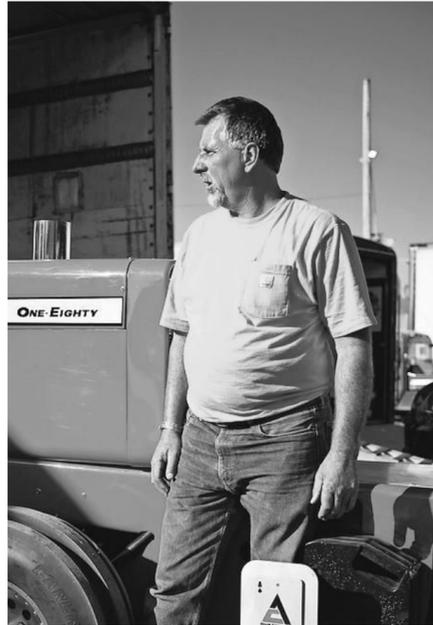


MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Terry Ackerman, a farmer, at the Marion County Fair, in Ohio. About the tariffs, he said, "It's short-term pain for long-term gain."

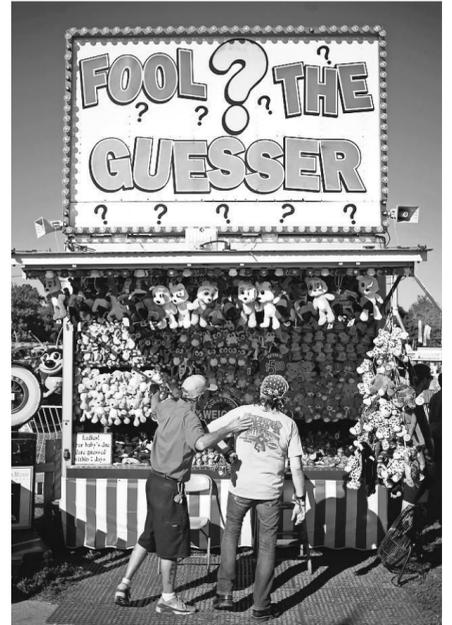


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LUKE SHARRETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ron Mitchell, also a farmer, at the Shelby County Fair, in Indiana. He said trade policy is "going to be hard on the farmer" for a bit.



LUKE SHARRETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Trade politics at the county fair

Visits to 3 states uncover some opinions about the president's global face-off

BY ALAN BLINDER, THOMAS FULLER AND MONICA DAVEY

Few things in life are more reliable than an American county fair. Evoking decades past, they appear every year — hot and sticky, an emporium of pop-up rides in cartoon colors, fried foods on sticks and contests that bring blue ribbons.

Long ripe for political debates, fairs are also places to contemplate the variables of farm and ranch life. Beyond rain, drought and finicky machinery, this year offers a new subject: a global face-off over tariffs.

To get a glimpse at a summer of uncertainty, we visited three weekend fairs: one near Indianapolis, another in an Ohio county of about 65,000 people and still another southeast of San Francisco.

"NOT OPPOSED AT ALL"

MARION, OHIO — Terry Ackerman wore his "special occasion" boots, the ones made of sheepskin, to the Marion County Fair.

"I live for the fair," Mr. Ackerman said. "I always feel better about the future of our country after the fair."

Ohio is among the states most threatened by the trade dispute that last week led the Trump administration to impose \$34 billion worth of tariffs and provoked China's government to retaliate with its own levies on American soybeans, pork and other products. Although experts have warned that the intensifying clash could erase more than \$240 million a

year in soybean exports from Ohio, Mr. Ackerman did not come to the fair seeking solace. He is among the farmers who generally support the White House's approach to tariffs.

"I'm not opposed at all," said Mr. Ackerman, 58, who has farmed since his teenage years and now has about 800 acres of soybeans, corn and wheat, the leading crops around here. "It would certainly be better if we could progress without tariffs — there's no question about that — but I guess I would say it's short-term pain for long-term gain."

Marion County, about an hour north of Columbus, does not treat its fair as a summertime rite of a bygone era. Drive around the county seat, where Warren G. Harding staged his "Return to Normalcy" campaign from his front porch in 1920, and you'll see signs posted by businesses and civic institutions beckoning visitors to the fenced-in fairgrounds. The fair book for this year's event, the 168th iteration, ran 92 pages.

And on sale day, it seemed no sound — no midway ride, no crackling caldron of frying oil, no turkey's gobble — rose above the cries and pleas of a short-sleeved auctioneer.

You could hear him from the parking lot. You could hear him at the stand with \$3 chocolate milkshakes. And, of course, you could hear him while you sidestepped hogs and the kids with pig whips.

Mr. Ackerman, whose children used to show cattle, has been coming to the fair for decades. In that time, he has become increasingly wary of the trade imbalance between the United States and China. He does not expect, or even necessarily want, a perfect trade balance with Beijing; instead, he talks about a more "level playing field."

"They're smart, shrewd people," Mr.

Ackerman says of Chinese importers, "and I tip my hat to them. If I was buying a bunch of grain, I'd be trying to buy it as cheap as I could, too."

Mr. Ackerman said he voted for President Trump and credits him with recognizing the trade issue's urgency. "There's enough win-wins that can be had in trade, and I think the United States in the past has not pressed for more of that win-win situation," Mr. Ackerman said.

He hopes that the tariffs imposed by the Trump administration in recent weeks will inspire what he perceives as a crucially needed shift. But they could convulse Marion County, which, because of its farms and a Whirlpool factory that can make about 20,000 dryers a day, has a larger stake in the trade war than many places.

Mr. Ackerman knows he is "not bulletproof," but with some hedging and a generational advantage over younger farmers with more debts and fewer savings, he figures he can handle a two-year trade battle.

"I spend time figuring out how to manage it," he said. "I'm comfortable, but don't misunderstand: It's not without concern, but I really think this is going to get worked out."

A DIFFERENT KIND OF HOG FARMING

PLEASANTON, CALIF. — Hog prices have never been higher at the Alameda County Fair.

Garrett Post, 18, got more than \$2,000 for his 265-pound pig, Kanan. You could easily get a half-dozen pigs for that price at a commercial auction.

But at this fair, overpaying for hogs raised by hobbyist farmers is the point. Unlike hog farmers elsewhere in the country, who are already fearing the impact of new tariffs that China imposed

"Don't misunderstand: It's not without concern, but I really think this is going to get worked out."

last week on American pork, fairgoers in Alameda County this weekend were more concerned about the trade war's potential impact on Northern California's wine industry and the nearby ports.

Mr. Trump is already unpopular in this part of the country. The trade war has done little to affect that.

The buyer of Mr. Post's pig, a man in a cowboy hat and black shirt embroidered with horseshoes and a large silver and gold "swine leader" belt buckle, was not a disinterested party.

He's an engineer at Chevron, the oil company, who lives in the Oakland hills with a view of the San Francisco skyline and the Golden Gate Bridge. He is also Garrett's father. Ron Post bought his son's pig on behalf of his neighbors, who each paid a share to get fresh cuts of meat from a pig that went on regular walks on the fire trail in the open space behind their homes.

And that's the point of the youth auction at the Alameda County Fair. Local companies, family members, a local politician — everyone who buys hogs, cattle and lambs at the livestock auction knows they are paying way above market price.

"It's a great program for the kids," said Lou Seever, the owner of a tire and auto repair shop who bought more than \$20,000 worth of livestock at the youth auction on Sunday.

Scott Hagerty, a member of the Alameda County board of supervisors, attends every year, buys pigs and then do-

nates the meat to homeless shelters.

Land is so scarce and expensive in the Bay Area that raising pigs here doesn't make much economic sense.

"You can't buy a house in this town for under a million bucks — and that's a 40-year-old house," said Mr. Seever, who grew up in South San Francisco.

Promoters say raising farm animals keeps the kids out of trouble. And in a part of the country best known for giving birth to Google, Apple and Facebook, raising pigs is a decidedly offline experience.

Among the hobby farmers at the auction on Sunday, the trade war with China was not a topic of conversation. But Mr. Hagerty, the supervisor, said local vintners would most likely be impacted by China placing tariffs on American wine. Also potentially affected would be the Port of Oakland, which is in Alameda County, and which ships much of the Northern California wines that go overseas.

"HAVE TO WAIT THIS OUT"

SHELBYVILLE, IND. — The payoff of a tractor pull happens in less than a minute: Your engine roars, smoke billows, and your tractor barrels forward, often flipping up into a wheelie, dragging an impossibly heavy sled along a dirt track until it can go no farther.

The rest of the time is spent tending to that tractor, hauling it around inside a huge truck and devoting untold hours to rearing it for the next competition.

"Once the sport gets in your blood, it's just there," said Ron Mitchell, a farmer who spends his off hours wearing a fireproof suit and helmet, participating in tractor pulls like the one on Saturday evening on the final night of the Shelby County Fair. "You'll work a week for one 20-second pull," he said.

Like tractor pulls, farming takes patience. Mr. Mitchell, 53, has a lot of that. He has watched the corn on his fields and on fields around Shelby County, southeast of Indianapolis, grow tall and sturdy this season; old hopes for "knee high by the Fourth of July" have been wildly and happily surpassed.

All the while, Mr. Mitchell has also watched reports of a growing trade war with a sense of concern, but also with his trademark patience.

Long term, he says, the Trump administration's conflict with other countries over tariffs will probably end well, with more fair markets.

He says that would be good and has long been needed.

"But it's going to be hard on the farmer here for a bit," said Mr. Mitchell, who said he usually votes but chose not to in 2016; he wasn't comfortable with either Hillary Clinton or Mr. Trump.

Mr. Mitchell's soybeans have taken off in the last few weeks. The price, meanwhile, has been sinking recently amid speculation about the trade dispute's impact. So Mr. Mitchell has been thinking about small ways to cut costs.

Hold off on a new combine? Search for lower fertilizer costs? "We're going to have to wait this out," he said.

Mr. Trump won Indiana, and more than 70 percent of Shelby County voters chose him. Still, some at this county fair were more pointedly critical of the administration's trade fight. Why not remove people from welfare rather than punish farmers who were already making narrow profits, asked one farmer, who declined to be quoted by name.

Alan Blinder reported from Marion, Ohio; Thomas Fuller from Pleasanton, Calif.; and Monica Davey from Shelbyville, Ind.

Developers fight efforts to make them pay for public art

BY DANIEL GRANT

Real estate developers often agree to finance neighborhood improvements, like a sidewalk or a park or a bus stop, to help secure approval for their projects, but many are drawing the line in a new fight: paying for public art.

A growing effort in the United States to make developers include public art in their private projects or contribute to a public art fund is meeting angry resistance. Municipal leaders facing tight budgets are looking for alternative funding, but builders say the new ordinances are an "art tax" that increases the cost of a project.

"Among other cost drivers are the additional expense of hiring art consultants and attorneys to present proposed works to an art board," said Truly Burton, executive vice president of the Builders Association of South Florida. "All these factors into how much someone pays in rent or a mortgage payment every month."

Percent-for-art ordinances aimed at private developers have been growing in recent years, expanding statutes in 27 states and the District of Columbia, as well as in a variety of counties and cities and even for the federal government. These laws typically require around 1 percent of construction and renovation costs for public buildings to be set aside for the purchase of artworks for the site.

"There is a general understanding that art in a community elevates that community, making it safer, healthier and more fun to live in," said Sarah Conley Odenkirk, a Los Angeles lawyer specializing in transactional matters related to the arts in the private and public realms.

Cities in Florida and California have been leaders in instituting percent-for-art requirements for private developers. But they are facing pushback.

The Builders Association of South Florida and the Miami Downtown Development Authority are both battling a proposal before the Miami City Commission that would require developers

whose construction projects cost more than \$3 million to spend up to 1.25 percent on publicly accessible art.

The specific percentage depends on the construction costs, although developers could spend a bit less by contributing up to 1 percent of the cost to a city-managed fund for public art. Without proof that this requirement has been met, building owners would not receive a certificate of occupancy.

If the ordinance is adopted, it will generate approximately \$14 million annually in public art around the city, said Efrén Nuñez, a Miami city planner and a principal author of the measure.

But there is a debate over which neighborhoods should benefit from the regulation. The aim of the Miami Planning Department is to enhance neighborhoods through the installation of works of "art all over the city, not just in the wealthier areas," Mr. Nuñez said.

He said many developers of Class A commercial office buildings and luxury residential high-rises already incorporated works of art into their designs. However, the City Commission voted last year to exempt from the proposal developers of affordable housing projects.

"Everyone should have access to art, regardless of their social and economic status," Mr. Nuñez said.

But opponents complained that the ordinance would increase costs and that developers would not have a free hand in picking art they liked. Alyce M. Robertson, executive director of the Miami Downtown Development Authority, stated in a letter to the city manager that the legislation provided a "disincentive for investing in art, because any art commissioned by the property owner would be subject to review by an advisory committee."

The problem for local governments is that "public dollars have gotten much tighter" since the recession of 2008, Ms. Odenkirk said.

"There is a need for public-private partnerships," she added. "We need more public art."



Above, Kim Curry-Evans, the director of Scottsdale Public Art, inside "The Doors," top, a walk-in kaleidoscope by the sculptor Donald Lipski in Scottsdale, Ariz.

There is no database of the number of municipalities with percent-for-art requirements for private developers, although Ms. Odenkirk estimated the number at 80 to 100.

She stressed the societal need for the ordinances, saying that art "increases tourism, decreases vandalism and increases property values and thereby the tax base."

Some cities have found success. Scottsdale, Ariz., expanded its 1985 percent-for-art law to include art in private development because "funding for capital projects was declining," said Kim Curry-Evans, director of Scottsdale Public Art.

Developers in the city were among the strongest supporters of the law, Ms. Curry-Evans said. "It is not seen as taking money away but as enhancing and beautifying these building projects," she said.

Catcler Investments in Scottsdale installed a half-million dollars' worth of art, including large-scale photographic murals and a sculpture resembling a Lego brick, at its Soho Scottsdale condominium development.

"Putting art in new developments all over town is a brilliant idea, because it gives life to projects," said Irene Catsibris Clary, principal at Catcler.

But in other areas across the nation, developers are fighting back.

In Oakland, Calif., the Building Industry Association of the Bay Area sued to block an amendment that added developers of commercial and residential properties to the city's percent-for-art statute. The group argued that the law violated both the First Amendment, by requiring speech in the form of purchasing works of art, and the "takings clause" of the Fifth Amendment, which limits a public entity's ability to take control of private property for public use.

"The First Amendment's free-speech guarantees include the right not to give voice to someone else's message," the association said in a statement.

In February, the Federal District Court in San Francisco ruled in favor of the city, saying the Supreme Court has interpreted the "takings clause" to apply only when government officials require something from a developer regarding a specific property rather than a broad class of properties.

Judge Vince Chhabria also ruled that "the ordinance does not require a developer to express any specific viewpoint,

"Art in a community elevates that community."

because developers can purchase and display art that they choose."

Despite the increased resistance, some municipalities have found ways to negotiate with builders to sweeten the requirement.

St. Louis Park, Minn., for instance, has no ordinance for public art, but city officials are "able to require it when the developer is getting something in return from the city," said the city's community development director, Karen Barton. The negotiations may include public financing or flexibility in land-use requirements, she said.

In Portland, Ore., the building code states that developers may obtain "zoning bonuses," such as additional square footage, by incorporating public art into their projects. Suwanee, Ga., "will not issue building permits" until developers meet with the Public Arts Commission to hear a pitch about spending 1 percent of construction costs on public artwork.

That requirement to meet with the commission seemed less "combative" than ordering a 1 percent art expenditure, said Toni Shrewsbury, special projects coordinator in Suwanee's economic development office.

"Developers we talked to said that requirement wouldn't be met with opposition if the percent-for-art rule weren't mandatory," she said.

What these percent-for-art ordinances do not address is what happens to the public artwork after it has been installed. Ms. Odenkirk noted that some building owners in Los Angeles had removed them — selling them, junking them or just putting them in storage or somewhere else — "which has the effect of undermining the process."

"There is no enforcement mechanism within these ordinances, and city officials don't want to irritate the developers who are putting resources into a community," she said.