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WEEKEND EDITION

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MARK VANCLEAVE, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Charlie Radman, a corn and soybean farmer, stands for a photo on the land his family has owned since 1899, near Randolph, Minn., Dec. 10.

Survey says consumers are not very merry

JOSH BOAK AND AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — This holiday season isn't quite so merry for American shoppers as large shares are dipping into savings, scouring for bargains and feeling like the overall economy is stuck in a rut under President Donald Trump, a new AP-NORC poll finds.

The vast majority of U.S. adults say they noticed higher than usual prices for groceries, electricity and holiday gifts in recent months, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

About half of Americans say it's harder than usual to afford the things they want to give as holiday gifts, and similar numbers are delaying big purchases or cutting back on nonessential purchases more than they would normally.

It's a sobering assessment for the Republican president, who returned to the White House in large part by promising to lower prices, only to find that inflation remains a threat to his

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FARMERS DOUBT AID WILL SOLVE AG INDUSTRY'S PROBLEMS

JOSH FUNK AND MARK VANCLEAVE
Associated Press

RANDOLPH, Minn. — When Donald Trump promised new tariffs while running for president, Gene Stehly worried that trade disputes would jeopardize his international sales of corn, soybeans and wheat.

A little more than a year later, Stehly said his fears have become a reality, and Trump's latest promise of federal assistance is insufficient to cover farmers' losses.

"Maybe this will all come out to be better at the end, but I can tell you right now, it certainly isn't the case at the moment," Stehly said.

Trump announced Monday that his Republican administration would distribute \$12 billion in one-time payments to farmers, who have suffered from persistently low commodity prices, rising costs and declining sales after China cut off all agricultural purchases from America during the trade war.

While rural areas remain conservative bastions, farmers' patience with Washington is wearing thin. Several of them described the government bailout, an echo of similar policies during Trump's first term, as a welcome stopgap, but one that will not solve the agricultural industry's problems.

"It's a bridge. It's not the ultimate solution we're looking for," said Charlie Radman,

a fourth-generation farmer who grows corn and soybeans on the land his family has owned near Randolph, Minnesota, since 1899. "What we really want to have is a little more certainty and not have to rely on these ad hoc payments."

But farmers' support for Trump remains steadfast.

Kansas sorghum farmer Garrett Love, who was at the White House when the aid was announced, said farmers know that securing fair trade deals is a "hard process," and farmers "appreciate lowering tax burdens, lowering regulations, increasing freedom, and Trump has definitely done that."

American soybean and sorghum farmers typically export at least half their crops. They were hit the hardest by Trump's trade dispute with China, the world's largest buyer of soybeans that has increasingly relied on harvests from Brazil and other South American nations.

Trump and his Cabinet have boasted about the deal he struck with Chinese President Xi Jinping in October. But Liu Pengyu, the spokesperson for the Chinese embassy, said this week that "agriculture trade cooperation between China and the United States is proceeding in an orderly manner" without giving specifics.

So far, China has bought only a little more

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Residents experiencing discolored water from taps

DAVID GOLBITZ
Fremont Tribune

The City of Fremont responded to complaints about water quality Friday afternoon with a social media post that explains the situation.

Residents across the city have contacted the city to report "cloudy or discolored" water, according to the post.

The cold weather has impeded efforts to flush the city's water system, allowing sediment to build up. The city will continue flushing the system as temperatures allow.

The social media post says that the city "continuously tests the water supply and that the system remains in compliance with state standards. There are no health hazards associated with the discoloration."

If your water is discolored, the city recommends running the tap until the water clears, though that may not help in areas where hydrants haven't yet been flushed.

If residents do have discolored water, it is recommended to avoid washing clothes — whites, especially — so that the discolored water doesn't stain them.

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