

# CALIFORNIA DAIRY CAMPAIGN

*Dairymen working for Dairymen*



October 20, 2017



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**Joint Quota Implementation Plan (QIP) Meeting held in Modesto:** This week the first in a series of three joint meetings organized by California Dairy Campaign (CDC), Milk Producers Council (MPC), Western United Dairymen (WUD), California Dairies, Inc. (CDI), Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) and Land O'Lakes (LOL) was held to provide information about the QIP to dairy producers across the state. All six organizations are urging California dairy producers to vote "Yes" on their QIP ballot because it is the only path forward to ensure a fair consideration of a federal order in California. Ballots must be mailed to CDFA and received or postmarked by December 4, 2017. A critical step in the process to establish a federal order in California is to maintain the statewide quota program and the QIP would ensure that the quota program is maintained and administered by CDFA in the federal order system. The QIP was finalized by the Milk Pooling Producer Review Board which consisted of quota holders and non-quota holders alike and approved in its entirety by CDFA Secretary Karen Ross for a statewide vote. The next meetings are set for November 6<sup>th</sup> at the Chino County Fairgrounds and on November 7<sup>th</sup> at the Tulare Agricultural Center. *For more information, contact CDC Executive Director Lynne McBride at 925-385-0217.*

**Farmer Fair Practices Rules Withdrawn** - On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it would be terminating two of three Farmer Fair Practices Rules that were intended to "target the most harmful practices hurting farmers" and offer "common sense protections to restore fairness and reduce the burden for farmers seeking justice under the Packers and Stockyards Act."

One of the scrapped provisions was an interim final rule on competitive injury that, if passed, would have eliminated the unreasonable burden that requires growers to prove that harm was done to the entire industry rather than only to themselves in order to be able to sue for abusive practices. According to the USDA, the rule was merely a formal clarification of the administration's "long time position" on the matter. However, opponents of the rule insisted that it would have encouraged superfluous lawsuits and caused an unnecessary disruption to the status quo.

The other rule withdrawn was a proposed rule on unfair practices that "would clarify what GIPSA views as practices that clearly violate the Act and would establish criteria to protect the legal rights of farmers." A third rule that "would establish criteria that GIPSA would consider in determining whether a live poultry dealer has engaged in a pattern or practice to use a poultry grower ranking system unfairly" was not explicitly addressed, and it is currently unclear what its ultimate fate will be.

The decision occurred just days before the interim final rule was expected to go into effect, after numerous months of delays and debate. Indeed, the 2008 Farm Bill required that the USDA provide greater protections to farmers and ranchers in the livestock and poultry industries by defining, strengthening, and enforcing the now nearly century-old Packers and Stockyards Act. Unfortunately, ongoing efforts to do so have been quelled by the protests of large corporations and industry groups.

National Farmers Union (NFU) was deeply disappointed by the announcement, especially considering the abuses that contract poultry growers face in the vertically integrated marketplace. As it stands, integrators wield immense power over growers, who have very little control over their operations and often do not turn a profit. By eliminating these basic and long-overdue protections, this decision puts the needs of a few corporations before those of thousands of family food producers. *(Source: NFU)*

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