



September 14, 2018

## 350 Family Farm Advocates 'Fly-In' to Washington to Lobby Congress, the Administration



**WASHINGTON** - As family farmers and ranchers endure a growing financial crisis in the farm economy, a handful of congressional champions for family agriculture joined the National Farmers Union (NFU) Fly-In today in emphasizing the critical need for passage of the 2018 farm

bill and significant long-term support for farmers amidst an escalating trade war.

“There’s a crisis in the making for many North Dakota farmers, and they deserve better than being treated like collateral damage in the administration’s trade war,” said U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota at the NFU Fly-In. “Amid ongoing trade uncertainty, farmers and ranchers need a strong, bipartisan bill that protects crop insurance, gives growers much-needed predictability, and expands— not shrinks— their access to global markets.”

Net farm income has plummeted by nearly 50 percent over the past five years, leaving a majority of family farmers earning negative farm income, many of them in severe financial strain, and even more without the opportunity to farm again next year. On top of low farm income, the administration’s trade war with the world has further depressed commodity prices and caused long-term damage to vital trade markets for U.S. farm products.

“Colorado farmers and ranchers want to compete and grow in local and global markets—not be stifled by erratic policy from Washington,” explained U.S. Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado. “In light of low commodity prices and persistent drought, we worked hard in the Senate to pass a bipartisan Farm Bill with a reliable farm safety net and fully funded conservation programs. Instead of acting responsibly, this Administration’s trade war is inflicting long-term damage on our agricultural economy. This damage—and continued market uncertainty—make it all the more pressing to send a bipartisan Farm Bill to the President’s desk. ”

U.S. Senator Tina Smith of Minnesota said Congress must pass the 2018 Farm Bill ahead of the September 30 expiration of the current farm bill.

“The farm economy in Minnesota and across the country has been hit hard by years of low prices and now is dealing with harmful trade disruptions,” said Sen. Smith. “Our producers need a Farm Bill that will get them through the current hard times and provide them with the certainty they need to plan their

operations into the future. The Senate overwhelmingly passed a bipartisan Farm Bill with a strong safety net and policies that will enhance the farm economy in Minnesota and across the country. Now we need to get it over the finish line and signed into law.”

Sens. Joe Donnelly of Indiana, Charles Grassley of Iowa, and John Hoeven of North Dakota, and Reps. Jim McGovern of Massachusetts and Chellie Pingree of Maine also spoke to the importance of congressional action on behalf of family farmers.

Three hundred and fifty Farmers Union members made the trip to Washington, D.C., this week to push for passage of a farm bill that supports family agriculture, strong protections and from international trade market disruptions. The group spent days visiting all 535 congressional offices to deliver their personal stories as to how federal level policies impact their families and communities.

“Family farmers and ranchers are in the midst of the worst decline in the farm economy in decades, and they want to see action from their federal representatives,” said NFU President Roger Johnson. “It is critical right now for family farm agriculture to have the support of Congress and the administration. And that support can come through immediate passage of the farm bill and movement on a long-term, legislative solution that protects family farmers from the significant damage occurring to our trade markets.”

## Canadian Dairy System Major Focus of National Farmers Union Legislative Fly-in



California Dairy Campaign President Joe Augusto joined California Farmers Union Vice President George Davis, California Dairy Campaign Board Member Mark McAfee and Blaine McAfee on the National Farmers Union Fly-in to the nation's capital this week and the Canadian dairy system was a major focus.

During the NFU fly-in, participants met with dairy farmers from Canada as well as officials from the Canadian Embassy to discuss details of the Canadian inventory management system. CDC has joined with dairy farmers from around the country to urge U.S. lawmakers to comprehensively reform federal dairy policy to ensure dairy farmers are paid a fair milk price. This year, the average price paid to dairy farmers in Canada is stable and well above average production costs. Dairy farmers from across the country spoke with federal lawmakers about a plan, the Sustainable Milk Inventory System Act (SMISA) to incorporate the structure of the Canadian system in future federal dairy policy.

California Dairy Campaign (CDC) has put forward a plan that incorporates the three major components of the Canadian system including inventory management, fair milk prices and effective management of dairy imports and exports. The California Farmers Union Fly-in delegation and Farmers Union members from other dairy states met with federal lawmakers and officials about the three point plan, the Sustainable Milk Inventory System Act (SMISA), which would build a three-legged stool to foster a strong and

sustainable dairy system in the United States.

A summary of the SMISA can be found on the CDC web site at

[www.californiadairycampaign.com](http://www.californiadairycampaign.com).

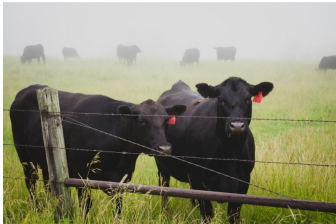
(Executive Director Lynne McBride)

*Contact us with your thoughts and feedback on the SMISA proposal by phone at 209-632-0885 or by email at [cdc@californiadairycampaign.com](mailto:cdc@californiadairycampaign.com)  
We continue to make improvements and look forward to your input.*

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## Monday, September 17 Last Day to Comment on U.S.A. Meat Labeling

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### **Action Alert: Comment on "Product of U.S.A." by September 17, 2018**

California Dairy Campaign and California Farmers Union submitted comments in support of a petition to require that only meat that is born, raised and processed is labeled "Product of U.S.A." The

Organization for Competitive Markets and American Grassfed Association submitted a petition earlier this year to restrict the use of "Product of U.S.A." labels exclusively to products that are of domestic origin. Current standards allow meat products that pass through a U.S.D.A. inspected plant to use the label, regardless of where the animal was raised.

### **FSIS is accepting comments on the petition through September 17.**

The petition submitted by AGA and OCM and the link for comment

submissions can be found at the following link: [Comment on USA Meat Labeling Today](#)

- **Key points to include in comments:**
- The current FSIS labeling policy for "Product of U.S.A." grants foreign countries and foreign interests unfair marketing opportunity that harms America's family farmers by allowing foreign entities to receive a premium from consumers who unwittingly believe they are buying meat and meat products with ingredients that originate domestically.
- Research has shown that as many as 93% of Americans want to know where their food comes from and 75% of Americans indicate the source of origin of their food is a major attribute when making their food choices. The current FSIS policy misleads Americans when they are making their purchases and denies America's family farmers these food dollars. FSIS food labeling policy for "Product of U.S.A." should be based on the source of the ingredients.
- The current FSIS labeling policy for "Product of U.S.A." deceives America's consumers who have clearly demonstrated they will pay a premium for meat and meat products sourced domestically by misbranding foreign meat and meat products as "Product of U.S.A."
- In passing the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), Congress acknowledged the financial harm misbranding and mislabeling causes America's livestock producers and clearly stated this as a key basis for the adoption of FMIA.

- Both the Federal Meat Inspection Act and FSIS regulations clearly establish that meat and meat product labels must not mislead the consumer nor must they be false. FMIA states that meat or meat food products shall be “misbranded” if its “labeling is false or misleading in any particular.” The current FSIS policy on labeling “Product of U.S.A.” must be clarified to correctly reflect the federal law ensuring U.S. consumers are not misled or deceived.
  - Australia is a leading beef exporter into the U.S. and has just implemented a mandatory retail Country of Origin Labeling requirement. The current U.S. policy that allows Australian beef to pass through a USDA inspected facility and then to be labeled “Product of U.S.A.” clearly gives Australian ranchers and foreign interests a grossly unfair marketing advantage over American family farmers by allowing these foreign interests to receive a premium in both the U.S. and Australian market.
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