



News Release

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"Connecting Cows, Cooperatives, Capitol Hill, and Consumers"

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NMPF Joins Other Groups in Urging Congress to Pass New Farm Bill in Lame Duck Session
Time Running Out for Legislators to Improve Dairy Farmer Safety Net

ARLINGTON, VA – The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) today joined more than 230 other farm, agriculture and food groups in urging Congress to pass a new, five-year farm bill in the upcoming lame duck congressional session expected to begin this week.

The [letter](#), which was directed at the Republican and Democratic leaders of the House of Representatives, noted that there is still ample time for the House to complete its work on a new farm bill, and reconcile any differences with the already-adopted farm bill approved last summer by the Senate.

Failure to pass a new bill before Dec. 31st "will create significant budget uncertainty for the entire agricultural sector, including the rural businesses and lenders whose livelihoods are dependent upon farmers' and livestock producers' economic viability," the letter said.

NMPF has been working for three years on a new and better safety net for dairy farmers that was incorporated by the House Agriculture Committee in the overall farm bill adopted by that panel in August. The dairy reforms featured in both the House and Senate versions of the new farm bill will reduce government expenditures compared to current policy.

"If the question in Washington is how to reform government programs and make them more effective, we have an answer: pass the 2012 Farm Bill. The dairy title, along with the rest of the bill, saves money compared to the present program," said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of NMPF.

While some have suggested that Congress should forego action on a new bill and simply pass an extension of current programs, "any temporary extension would be a short-sighted, inadequate solution that would leave our constituencies crippled by uncertainty. Both the Senate and the House Committee on Agriculture passed versions of a five-year farm bill with strong bipartisan support. We urge you to lead your colleagues in passing a new 2012 Farm Bill this year," the coalition letter said.

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NMPF's Board of Directors earlier this year came out against an extension of the status quo, asserting that an extension of current policy through 2013 does dairy farmers no real good, and leaves the tough choices about budget priorities unresolved.

NMPF President Jerry Kozak said that if Congress can't generate the necessary effort to pass a new farm bill this year, the organization would not support an extension of current dairy programs, and instead would insist on getting the Dairy Security Act – the dairy reform bill already included in the Senate version of the Farm Bill – included in any extension package of other farm programs.

"We've come too far to acquiesce to another serving of the status quo. Dairy farmers need more than platitudes from Congress – we need action and leadership," he said.

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The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's 30 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit www.nmpf.org for more information.