



2101 Wilson Blvd., Suite 400, Arlington, VA 22201
703-243-6111 • www.nmpf.org

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

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Contact: Christopher Galen
(703) 243-6111 ext. 356
Email: CGalen@nmpf.org

114th Congress Will Include a Large, Bipartisan Dairy Farmer Caucus

ARLINGTON, VA – The new 114th Congress will feature a large and active group of House members looking out for the interests of dairy farmers, according to the National Milk Producers Federation.

A bipartisan group of legislators is reestablishing the six-year-old congressional Dairy Farmer caucus, and NMPF expects the new group to be even larger than the Dairy Farmer caucus in the 113th Congress.

"The 85-member caucus in 2013-14 was nearly one-fifth of the House," said NMPF Vice President for Government Relations John Hollay. "We expect the 2015 caucus will be at least that large." Hollay added that the dairy group is one of the most bipartisan and regionally diverse of the many caucuses in Congress.

The Dairy Farmer caucus educates House members on dairy industry issues and helps build consensus on legislation impacting milk producers and processors. For example, Hollay said, the caucus played a key role in enacting the 2015 farm bill, which included the most significant rewrite of federal dairy policy in more than a generation. The congressional Dairy Farmer caucus was initially started in 2006 to provide a bipartisan forum to collaborate on policy issues that addressed the interests of dairy producers nationwide.

In recent years, the caucus has worked closely with NMPF and the dairy industry to secure emergency funding for farmers suffering from low prices and disasters, protect dairy trade interests and secure passage of federal nutrition programs that deliver nutritious dairy products to school aged children.

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The eight House members who will serve as co-chairs of the congressional Dairy Farmer caucus in the 114th Congress are: Reid Ribble (R-WI), Peter Welch (D-VT), Michael Simpson (R-ID), Joe Courtney (D-CT), David Valadao (R-CA), Timothy Walz (D-MN), Tom Reed (R-NY) and Suzan DelBene (D-WA). The bipartisan group issued an invitation to their colleagues to join the caucus this week.

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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 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.