



News Release

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 18, 2017

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NMPF Recognizes Members of Congress for Focusing Attention on Dairy Workforce Needs

ARLINGTON, VA – As discussions over immigration policy continue on Capitol Hill, the National Milk Producers Federation today thanked members of both the House and Senate for working to address the unique labor challenges faced by dairy producers. NMPF has called on legislators to address this dilemma for more than a decade.

"We welcome these bipartisan efforts to shine a light on an issue so critical to dairy producers," said NMPF President and CEO Jim Mulhern. "Dairy farming is a physically demanding, 24-7, 365-day job. Without the help of foreign labor, many American dairy operations face the threat of closure. We appreciate that members of both parties are building awareness of the need for action on this challenge."

Two bills introduced recently would modify the existing H-2A agricultural visa program to make it easier for dairy farmers to hire the foreign labor they need to run their operations. Reps. Elise Stefanik (R-NY) and Chris Collins (R-NY) co-authored the Farm Family Relief Act in January. Rep. Sean Duffy's (R-WI) introduced the Defending the Agricultural Industry's Requirements Year-round (DAIRY) Act this month.

Separately, during a Senate Agriculture Committee hearing to confirm the next USDA Secretary, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) questioned nominee Sonny Perdue about finding a solution to the industry's immigration concerns. Perdue said he supports an exemption to the H-2A program so that dairy farms can hire workers year-round.

In addition to working closely with these and other members of Congress, NMPF remains engaged on the issue of immigration through its leadership in the Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC). The AWC continues to raise awareness with officials on Capitol Hill about the challenges facing the agriculture industry, specifically that of labor shortages and the role of immigrants in filling those jobs.

NMPF and the AWC have long supported immigration security and reform measures with the caveat that any proposal also includes avenues to protect current workers and enable a smooth transition to a visa program for future ones.

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The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), 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 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF's activities, visit our website at www.nmpf.org.