



News Release

National Milk Producers Federation • 2101 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201 • 703-243-6111 FAX 703-841-9328

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Contact: Christopher Galen
(703) 243-6111 ext. 356
E-Mail: Cgalen@nmpf.org

NMPF PLEASED OVERALL WITH INITIAL ACTION ON HOUSE FARM BILL Representative Gillibrand Seeks Dairy Farmer Protections

ARLINGTON, VA – The National Milk Producers Federation is generally pleased with the outcome of today’s discussion by the House Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee about what to include in the 2007 Farm Bill, although additional provisions will need to be addressed as the legislation winds its way through Congress.

“The new Farm Bill took its first baby steps today, but it has a long way to go before it can run,” said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of NMPF. “We appreciate the hard work that Subcommittee Chairman Leonard Boswell (D-IA) and his colleagues have invested in this process, and we will continue to work with them and others on the Agriculture Committee as the bill continues its progress.”

The subcommittee included as the primary dairy producer safety net a major revision of the dairy price support program, one that NMPF had suggested to the committee earlier this spring. The panel also included other provisions supported by NMPF, including a reauthorization of the Dairy Export Incentive Program, language requiring the U.S. Department of Agriculture to account for its inventory reporting procedures on nonfat dry milk, and provisions that requiring the USDA to expedite the hearing process for making changes in Federal Milk Marketing Orders.

In addition, NMPF’s efforts to include a direct payment program for farmers in this Farm Bill received strong support today from Boswell and other members of the Subcommittee, such as Reps. Kagen and Gillibrand, who discussed the need for a farmer payment program, and pledged to work to secure a funding baseline for it.

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Although the Subcommittee's legislative language did not address the dairy import assessment, Kozak expressed great confidence that the promotional checkoff on all dairy imports will be included in the full House Agriculture Committee deliberations this summer. The import assessment updates the domestic dairy checkoff so that it applies to imported dairy products as well, as is the case with most other agricultural commodities' checkoff programs.

The subcommittee's discussion also included language creating a permanent forward contracting program for producers who sell milk in classes II, III and IV. The Federation does not support making the program permanent; rather, it should expire once the farm bill itself sunsets. NMPF also advocates the inclusion of several farmer-friendly protections as part of the forward contracting measure – stipulations that are not included in the version of the farm bill approved by the Dairy Subcommittee.

“We have serious reservations about the absence of producer safeguards in this measure, and we will be fighting in the coming months to ensure that those safeguards are ultimately part of the Farm Bill,” Kozak said. “Our support for forward contracting is conditioned on getting those protections included with the overall Farm Bill.”

He expressed gratitude for the efforts of Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), who raised similar concerns during discussion of the forward contracting program, saying that Gillibrand “clearly understands the need to create a forward contracting program that takes into consideration the needs of family dairy farmers, and we expect that she and other like-minded members of Congress will successfully address those needs as this bill proceeds from here.”

A full copy of NMPF's farm bill package can be found at www.nmpf.org.

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 32 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of nearly 50,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies.

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