



News Release

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

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NMPF Testifies at House Hearing in Favor of More U.S. Dairy Exports to Cuba

ARLINGTON, VA –The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) testified yesterday in favor of a recently introduced House bill that would foster additional U.S. agricultural exports to Cuba, and permit open travel for all Americans to that nation.

NMPF Board member John Wilson, who is Sr. Vice President of Marketing & Industry Affairs for Dairy Farmers of America, urged support for the Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act (H.R. 4645). The legislation is being championed by House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson and Representative Jerry Moran of Kansas. The legislation presently has 37 additional co-sponsors supporting it.

"NMPF believes that efforts to help regain the exports we lost last year are essential to helping farmers and putting the U.S. dairy industry on a firmer footing going forward," said Wilson. "H.R. 4645 represents one such positive step in the right direction to increase demand for U.S. dairy products."

The bill would establish clarity and predictability regarding the "cash-in-advance" provision of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (TSREEA) by ensuring its interpretation according to the original intent of Congress to allow for payment in a manner that did not impede trade, while also not offering the extension of credit to Cuba. Prior interpretations of this provision have hampered U.S. dairy exporters' ability to ship product to Cuba in a safe and cost-efficient manner, Wilson said.

The legislation would also remove a costly and unnecessary burden on U.S. agricultural exporters by allowing payment to pass from Cuba directly to U.S. banks in place of the current, more costly requirement that payments be routed through banks in other countries.

The other critical element that H.R. 4645 would tackle is to abolish restrictions on Americans' rights to travel to Cuba. This would facilitate U.S. exporters' ability to conduct business with Cuba, spurring greater demand for U.S. agricultural products, according to Wilson.

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NMPF NEWS RELEASE///PAGE TWO

In closing, said Wilson, “We look forward to enjoying the impact this legislation would have on our ability to more easily provide the Cuban people and those Americans wishing to travel to Cuba with the nutritious and safe foods that we produce in such abundance here in the United States.”

The National Milk Producers Federation has been joined by Dairy Farmers of America, the U.S. Dairy Export Council and many other dairy companies in seeking support for expanding the ability of the U.S. dairy industry to more easily and efficiently provide our products to Cuba, as well as to Americans wishing to travel to that country, by encouraging Members of Congress to support H.R. 4645.

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 40,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit www.nmpf.org for more information.