



News Release

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dairy Farmers Discuss Policy Priorities During Capitol Hill Visits

Meetings Focus on Industry Issues Including Farm Bill, Food Labeling, Trade & Immigration

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Dairy farmers from across the country visited Capitol Hill today as part of the National Milk Producers Federation's annual young farmer fly-in to Washington, where in more than 200 meetings they asked lawmakers for action on a handful of issues important to the dairy sector.

More than 70 farmers from 21 states visited their House and Senate members Tuesday as part of their role as national leaders in the 2017 NMPF Young Cooperator (YC) program. The dairy producers discussed the challenges they currently face, and highlighted four priority policy issues that need Congress' attention:



2017 YC Chaircouple Melissa and Adam Griffin pose outside the U.S. Capitol.

- The need to make significant improvements to the structure of USDA's dairy Margin Protection Program, which currently is not providing an adequate economic safety net for farmers;
 - The DAIRY PRIDE Act, which would require the U.S Food and Drug Administration to enforce existing food standards specifying that dairy terms such as "milk," "cheese," "yogurt" and "ice cream" should only be used by foods made from real milk;
 - The importance of a balanced approach to trade policy, especially as the 24-year-old NAFTA agreement is renegotiated by the United States, Canada and Mexico;
 - The need to reform immigration laws in a manner that helps preserve the existing agricultural workforce and allows for the future flow of dairy farm workers.



(L-R) DFA producers Alex Peterson, Tiffany Lenz, Adam Lenz and Mark Fellwock meet with Sen. Claire McCaskill's staff.

"We are excited to share the first-person perspective of America's dairy sector at a time when elected officials in Washington really need to hear our voice about the topics that matter most to farmers," said Melissa Griffin, a dairy farmer from Buckland, Mass., and chairwoman of the 2017 YC Advisory Council.

Griffin's husband Adam, who co-chairs the council, added that "we were able to make our points about issues specific to dairy, such as the need for a viable farm safety net and the importance of integrity in federal food labeling laws. We also showed how high-profile national issues such as trade and immigration affect our family farm in New England."

Randy Mooney, chairman of NMPF and a dairy farmer from Rogersville, Mo., said that the YC Program "provides our community with a powerful grassroots presence. We need their engagement in Washington because there are so many issues competing for the attention of Congress. Thanks to our younger leaders stepping forward, we have a much better opportunity to reach our legislative goals."



(L-R) Land O' Lakes producer Allen Williams meets with New Jersey Rep. Frank LoBiondo.

The NMPF Young Cooperators will join NMPF's Board of Directors on Wednesday for their June board meeting.

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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.