



News Release

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, October 2, 2017

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**NMPF, Dairy Industry Organizations Announce Support for Legislation
Creating New Agriculture Guest Worker Program**

*Goodlatte's AG Act Reflects Key Goals of Dairy Producers Seeking
Changes in Immigration Policy*

ARLINGTON, VA – A coalition of dozens of dairy farm organizations, led by the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), is supporting new congressional legislation that would help address one of the most challenging issues affecting America's milk producers: obtaining a dependable, legal workforce.

A founding member of the Agriculture Workforce Coalition, NMPF was joined by 57 dairy cooperatives and state dairy farmer associations today [on a letter](#) backing Rep. Robert Goodlatte's (R-VA) new Agriculture Guestworker (AG) Act. Goodlatte's House Judiciary Committee is expected to formally mark up the legislation on Wednesday, Oct. 4. The AG Act would establish an entirely new visa program, dubbed the H-2C visa, which would allow farm employers to bring in foreign workers on a year-round basis. It would replace the existing H-2A temporary visa program, which dairy farmers cannot use because their labor needs are year-round, not seasonal.

NMPF President and CEO Jim Mulhern said Goodlatte's bill "is a significant step forward in providing positive, workable solutions for dairy farm employers. It recognizes that we need to move past the status quo and pursue a new approach to matching the supply and demand for workers in U.S. agriculture."

Mulhern said Goodlatte's AG Act "reflects many of the key principles that our organization and its members have offered to the Judiciary Committee as the measure was developed." In addition to establishing the new type of visa for future workers, it would allow current undocumented farm workers to apply for H-2C visas so that they can participate legally in the agricultural workforce. The new H-2C program will be administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, not the Department of Labor.

George Rohrer, a dairy farmer in Dayton, Va., and a member of the NMPF Board of Directors, said that farmers "have waited for years for lawmakers to fix our broken immigration system. The AG Act is evidence that Congressman Goodlatte has listened to many of our concerns, and is willing to try a new

approach to the problem. As a farmer, it's difficult to plan for tomorrow when you don't know whether you'll be able to hire qualified people today."

In addition to legislation addressing the needs of farm employers, the House Judiciary Committee will also consider a measure requiring the use of the E-Verify database program. NMPF has been clear that mandatory E-Verify participation should only be required if farmers first have protections in place for current workers and access to a future labor pool.

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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.