

Farmers Union Testifies For A Comprehensive New Farm Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — National Farmers Union (NFU) President Leland Swenson recently outlined the family farmer and rancher organization's recommendations for a comprehensive new farm bill before the Senate Agriculture Committee. According to Swenson, the plan provides the opportunity for more farm income from the market and less from the government, stems the price crisis, and fixes the inequities that have been created by Freedom to Farm.

According to Swenson, NFU's legislative initiative provides a strong farm safety net based on a counter-cyclical, non-recourse marketing loan that takes into account producer costs and productivity to address the depressed commodity prices faced by America's family farmers and ranchers.

NFU's farm proposal also provides:

- The establishment of limited, non-commercial commodity reserves to ensure the U.S. long-term commitment to renewable fuels and humanitarian assistance.

- The creation of a limited production loss reserve program that would provide a supplement

to risk management.

- A price support program for dairy that is funded at a level that will enable efficient, family-sized dairy producers to receive a reasonable return for their efforts.

- Assurance of the competitiveness of U.S. commodities in domestic and foreign markets.

- Planting flexibility.

- An energy policy that emphasizes a commitment to renewable sources of energy made from commodities produced on America's farms.

- Protections against agriculture and food industry consolidation.

- Expanded conservation programs.

- A renewed commitment to rural housing, economic development and infrastructure.

- Country-of-origin labeling for meat and produce.

"We are pleased that the Senate has chosen to expedite the task of developing a new farm law," Swenson said. "We look forward to continued work with the committee and the rest of the Congress to improve the economy for independent producers and rural America."

NFU Opposes Trade Promotion Authority Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Robert Carlson, president of the North Dakota Farmers Union, on behalf of the National Farmers Union, stated opposition to the "Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2001" recently introduced by Congressman Philip Crane.

According to Carlson, Crane's "fast track" trade negotiation legislation will allow U.S. trade negotiations to conclude bilateral and multi-lateral trade agreements that continue to disadvantage U.S. farmers and ranchers in the global marketplace.

Carlson stated that the legislation fails to ensure that issues critical to creating fair trade in agricultural products are addressed in negotiations and does not provide an adequate opportunity for input and oversight by the Congress or those directly affected by the outcome of trade negotiations.

The National Farmers Union has elaborated seven principles that must be priorities for the U.S. in all international trade agreements and negotiating authorities. According to Carlson, the Crane bill ignores four of those principles encompassing: 1)

The anti-competitive and trade distorting impact of exchange rates, 2) Creation of an equitable balance and improved environmental standards and enforcement procedures, 3) Establishment of enforceable labor standards, and, 4) Coordination of international efforts to reduce the anti-competitive practices and results of increased integration within agriculture.

Carlson also stated that the legislation identifies but does not adequately ensure that: 1) Domestic trade remedies, such as the anti-dumping provisions of

U.S. trade law will not be subject to negotiation, 2) Economic assistance programs to mitigate the adverse impact of unfair trade practices by others will be provided, and, 3) the U.S. will maintain its ability and flexibility as a sovereign nation to implement domestic economic safety net policies for producers.

The National Farmers Union seeks to ensure that fair trade interests of American family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities are addressed in all U.S. trade related activities, Carlson added.

'Smart' Fertilizer

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"smart" fertilizer can play a role in improving the environment, growers and consumers can also benefit from improved plant quality. In experiments with marigold and impatiens grown in the greenhouse, plants that received the new "smart" fertilizer developed better root systems. High phosphorus levels created by traditional fertilizer systems discourage root growth. Better root systems enable the plant to be more drought tolerant. Plants nourished with the "smart" fertilizer also had a slightly higher number of flowers and the flow-

ers wilted more slowly during drought.

"The buffered fertilizer system can also be recharged after most of the phosphorus on the aluminum oxide is gone," said Lynch. "Using existing systems the grower can add phosphoric acid and the buffer could be good for 20 to 25 years."

The new fertilizer supplies only phosphorus, one of the three primary elements needed for plant growth. The researchers are beginning research programs to develop similar systems for nitrogen and potassium.

Basic Organic Inspector Training Scheduled

CENTRE HALL (Centre Co.) — Pennsylvania Certified Organic will co-sponsor Basic Organic Farm and Livestock Inspector Trainings at Millersville University Aug. 16-20.

The farm training is scheduled Aug. 16-18, and the livestock training, which will include training on poultry and dairy inspection, is scheduled Aug. 19-20. The livestock training is open to those who have attended a Basic Farm previously or who are attending the farm course also.

This is an excellent opportunity for people with agriculture

backgrounds who like working with farmers. PCO contracts trained inspectors to inspect more than 250 organic farms and processors within Pennsylvania.

For information or application forms, contact PCO, 1919 General Potter Hwy., Suite 1, Centre Hall, PA 16828, (814) 364-1344, paorganic@aol.com. Other co-sponsors include New York Certified Organic, Northeast Organic Farming associations of N.Y. and N.J. and Maryland Department of Agriculture. Application deadline is July 13.

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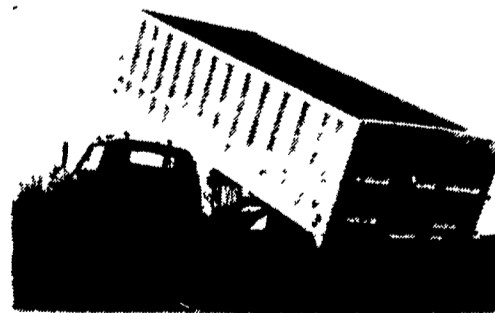
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