

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON (July 10, 2012) – [National Farmers Union](#) (NFU) President Roger Johnson sent a letter to leadership on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture outlining the organization's priorities for the 2012 Farm Bill, which is scheduled to be marked up by the committee tomorrow.

"NFU is pleased to see the House Agriculture Committee working diligently to write and pass a 2012 Farm Bill," said Johnson. "The bill provides for meaningful protection against long-term commodity price collapse with the optional Price Loss Coverage program, and the reference prices are equitable and reasonable. This is a critical component of any safety net. The bill also makes significant investments in conservation programs, which a recent NFU poll found are overwhelmingly supported by farmers and ranchers across the country."

In the letter, NFU also discussed improvements that could be made to the bill, particularly in the energy title.

"While it is good to see a bill moving and provide meaningful protection against a long-term price collapse, there are aspects of the bill that should be changed," said Johnson. "NFU is disappointed by the lack of mandatory funding in the energy title, which has broad bipartisan support across the country and produces outside benefits for rural economies and our nation's energy security. Additionally, we are concerned that the legislation prohibits funding of ethanol blender pumps and feasibility studies for renewable energy projects. Energy programs are a critical part of rural development.

A number of possible amendments or changes to the current bill also concerned NFU.

“NFU urges the committee to reject any amendments that would strip the market stabilization program from the dairy reforms in the bill,” said Johnson. “Doing so would likely cause milk prices to decline unchecked with increased production, making the program extremely costly. The committee should not undo the important progress for family farmers, ranchers and consumers made by the Country-of-Origin Labeling and Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration rules. The no-cost sugar program should also not be repealed or damaged in any way. We are pleased that the committee is proceeding with mark-up of this important legislation and we look forward to continuing to work with you.”

“Just as crop insurance and commodity programs serve as a safety net for farmers who face losses caused by weather-related disasters or price collapse, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is a lifeline for those in dire situations who face unexpected hardship,” said Johnson. “In order to preserve program integrity and ensure consistency between the House and Senate versions of the legislation to ease the conference process, I urge you to restore nutrition title funding to the level included in the nutrition title of the Senate-passed farm bill.”

National Farmers Union has been working since 1902 to protect and enhance the economic well-being and quality of life for family farmers, ranchers and rural communities through advocating grassroots-driven policy positions adopted by its membership.

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