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Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) passed Congress in June and was signed into law, allowing the president to “fast-track” trade agreements through Congress. Later in the month, the 79th Annual All-States Leadership Camp took place in Bailey, Colorado, a new National Youth Advisory Council was elected, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) approved imports of beef from northern Argentina and Brazil. Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) also continues to be a hot issue in Washington, as Congress mulls repeal of the law against changing it to a voluntary program.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY PASSES



In late June, Congress passed Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), or “fast-track,” which allows the executive branch to negotiate international agreements - such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) - that Congress can either approve or disapprove, but not amend.

Negotiations on TPP will ramp up now

that TPA has passed. The U.S. is hosting what may be the final negotiating round in Hawaii at the end of July. U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman said that a final TPP could be sent to Congress before the end of the year.

As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the U.S. has entered into free trade agreements with 20 countries. Under these agreements, many important U.S. laws protecting investors, labor rights, the environment and the U.S. currency have been preempted. There has also been a damaging economic effect. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States had a \$505 billion trade deficit in 2014, which represents a three percent drag on the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. NFU will continue to work for a trade policy that prioritizes domestic food production and goods supply chains instead of flawed policies that force family farmers and ranchers out of business, depress wages and export too many of America’s best jobs.

79TH ALL-STATES CAMP, NYAC ELECTED

The 79th NFU All-States Leadership Camp took place at the NFU Education Center in Bailey, Colorado, June 21-25. Over 60 participants from six states explored their personal leadership skills, identified issues important to their generation, and discussed their role in effecting positive change throughout rural America, both individually and through involvement in Farmers Union.

In addition to building leadership skills and participating in other learning

opportunities, campers enjoyed hikes and outdoor games, a talent show, dances, a campfire, box racing, and an outing to Breckenridge, Colorado. Campers also took part in cooperative activities and listened to several inspirational speakers: Olympic gold medalist Rulon Gardner; NFU President Roger Johnson; Oklahoma Farmers Union President Terry Detrick; NFU Senior Vice President of Programs Chandler Goule; comedian Josh Blue; and Washington State University Graduate Research Assistant Cedric Habiyaemye.



Every year at All-States, campers select six of their peers to represent thousands of Farmers Union youth across the country as the National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC). Eighteen campers at this year’s All-States camp applied for NYAC and the following six were selected by their fellow campers as representatives: Kiana Jean Brockel, South Dakota; Jesse Carlson, South Dakota; Andrew Cotter, Wisconsin; Alexandra Grace

Farber, South Dakota; Karly Jane Held, North Dakota; and Ali Slaughter, Wisconsin.

These young Farmers Union members will hone their leadership skills at a session in Washington, D.C., work and present at the 2016 NFU Convention, and help plan next year's 80th Annual NFU All-States Leadership Camp.

GIPSA RIDER EXLUDED FROM AG APPROPS

In early July, for the first time in years, the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee passed an agriculture appropriations bill that did not include a rider to prohibit U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) funding for implementation of regulations that promote fairness in marketing for family farmers and ranchers.



The appropriations bill must still go through the U.S. Senate and to President Obama, who has threatened to veto the bill for a variety of other reasons. If enacted into law, it will allow the USDA, through GIPSA, to implement basic protections for America's meat and poultry farmers.

DISAPPOINTING APHIS DECISION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has decided to allow importation of fresh and chilled beef from some regions of Brazil and Argentina, a move that has potentially devastating consequences for American family farmers and ranchers.

These regions have a history of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), which puts the economic livelihood of American producers at risk, as it unnecessarily exposes the U.S. livestock industry to a highly contagious disease, with the potential to spread very quickly. An outbreak could result in not only health safety issues, but also quarantine and eradication of animals, a ban on exports, and reduced consumer confidence, all economically devastating risks to American livestock producers.



In 2001, an outbreak of FMD in the United Kingdom (U.K.) resulted in the slaughter or burn of nearly 3 million animals. The epidemic was costly both to farmers and the economy; total losses to agriculture and the food chain amounting to roughly £3.1 billion. A 2002 study conducted by Purdue University and the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health at APHIS found that if an epidemic similar to the outbreak that occurred in the U.K. in 2001 were to strike the U.S., a loss of \$14 billion in U.S. farm income (in 2002 dollars) would result.

Fortunately, the House Appropriations Committee has taken action to require APHIS to complete a risk assessment and further site visits, which will delay importation from these two countries.

COOL UPDATE

Canada and Mexico challenged U.S. Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) at the World Trade Organization (WTO), contending the law is trade distorting. The WTO issued a ruling in May that stated the law was WTO-

compliant, but the way in which it was implemented was not. Canada and Mexico immediately issued retaliation threats in the form of tariffs on U.S. exports to each country.

NFU contends, however, that viable options remain on the table that would allow the U.S. to keep its popular labeling law while appeasing WTO demands. The Canadian threats appear premature and exaggerated, because Canada has yet to make a credible case for real economic harm.

Looking at a recent report from Dr. Robert Taylor at Auburn University, there is significant evidence indicating that any harm to U.S. trading partners by COOL has been negligible at best, and it is likely attributed to the economic downturn of 2008.

A bill to repeal COOL passed in the U.S. House of Representatives in June. The bill went far beyond what the WTO found fault with, as it includes repeal of chicken, ground beef and ground pork. National Farmers Union is urging the Senate to not give in to Canadian rhetoric and instead find a way to give the American public what it wants, which is to know where its food is from.



In June, Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., introduced a bill that would make COOL voluntary. The Senate will take up the COOL debate in mid-July.

The Washington Corner can also be found at www.nfu.org/corner.