

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Statement on farm bill passage

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Washington, D.C. -Today Rep. Mike Gallagher released the following statement after the House passed the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2).

"Dairy and agriculture are central to our heritage and way of life in Northeast Wisconsin. Our farmers, and the milk and food they produce, support thousands of jobs in our state and ensure that millions of people across the globe have food on their plates.

But unfortunately, farmers in the 8th District and across the country have been suffering through the worst farm economy in over a decade, and have seen real farm income decline 52 percent in the last five years alone. And while the overall economy has grown, there are still millions of Americans suffering in the cycle of poverty. In fact, there are nine million more people on SNAP today than there was a decade ago.

The Farm Bill I voted for, and the House passed today, is critical to reversing these trends. It helps ensure our farmers are treated fairly in global trade, do not face undue regulatory burdens, and have effective risk management tools when they need them most. It also invests an historic amount in education and training for SNAP recipients wanting to enter the workforce. More broadly, this year's farm bill represents both a down payment on ensuring our nation has a safe, diverse, and abundant food supply, and also an effort to end the cycle of poverty by offering a hand-up to Wisconsinites in need."

Jeff Lyon, General Manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, released the following statement:

“FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is pleased that the dairy title of the House Farm Bill met so many of our concerns and had bi-partisan support. I had an excellent meeting with Representative Gallagher and his staff earlier this month at his Washington, D.C. office. With hundreds of FarmFirst members in his district, we appreciate his support and understanding of the issues facing our dairy farmers.”

Farm Bill Highlights

Makes Multiple Gallagher-Backed Reforms to Dairy Policy

Renames the Margin Protection Program (MPP) the Dairy Risk Management (DRM) program. Increases the program's top coverage level from \$8.00 to \$9.00 to account for deficiencies in the program's feed formula. Milk production not covered under DRM is made fully eligible for a comparable crop insurance policy. Finally, monthly margin calculations are maintained to make the program more responsive, and class I milk calculations are adjusted to help dairy farmers better manage risk in the futures market.

Increases Conservation Opportunities

Makes important improvements to voluntary conservation programs, including creating a new Conservation Innovation Grants trials system to test new and innovative technologies that can help solve water quality challenges in keeping with Rep. Gallagher's Save the Bay Initiative. Increases funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to help producers implement voluntary conservation practices on their land and water.

Maintains Nutrition Programs

Maintains and strengthens the nation's nutrition programs to assist those who struggle to put food on the table, while providing critical training to help people learn the skills necessary to gain well-paying jobs, financial self-sufficiency and better futures for themselves and their families.

Responsibly Manages our Federal Forests

Includes Gallagher-backed provisions to improve management of our forests

including the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Northeast Wisconsin. Active forest management makes our ecosystem healthier, as well-managed forests provide critical wildlife habitat and serve as valuable carbon sinks.

Supports Critical Trade Promotion for Agriculture

Reauthorizes the Market Access Program and folds it into the new International Market Development Program, which will maintain and strengthen markets abroad for Wisconsin agricultural products.

Background on Wisconsin & Dairy:

Wisconsin is the second largest milk-producing state and is home to more dairy farms than any other state in the nation. Wisconsin's roughly 9,500 family-owned dairy farms, totaling well over 1 million cows, produce roughly 14 percent of the U.S. milk supply each year. These farmers are the lifeblood of our communities and the fresh milk they produce supports many jobs in the agricultural and food manufacturing sectors of our state.