

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Calls for deadline extension for farmers to enroll in improved dairy safety net tool

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Updated Dairy Margin Protection Program provides better resources for Wisconsin dairy farmers

Farmers encouraged to contact local Farm Service Agency office for details

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin joined a bipartisan group of Senators urging Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue to extend the June 1 deadline for re-enrollment in the Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP), which provides more cost-effective protections for Wisconsin dairy farmers. The USDA provided similar extensions in 2014 and 2016.

Because many dairy farmers are in the middle of spring planting season, Senator Baldwin and her colleagues, led by Senator Tina Smith (D-MN), are requesting an extension to provide dairy farmers in Wisconsin with the additional time needed to evaluate the MPP program and the changes that were made in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.

“We are writing to request that you provide a 30 day extension for re-enrollment in the Margin Protection Program (MPP) for dairy farmers from the current deadline of June 1, 2018,” the Senators wrote. “We understand that farmers are in the middle of spring planting season, many of whom are also dairy farmers. An extension would provide dairy farmers in our states the additional time needed to evaluate

the MPP program and the changes that were made in the Bipartisan Budget Act.”

The Senators continued, “Previous extensions have shown evidence that enrollment grows when the sign-up period is extended, and we urge USDA to continue further outreach and assistance in a farmer-friendly way should an extension be granted.”

Dairy farmers are encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency to discuss their options and sign up for the program. Farmers can estimate how the tool would work for their operation using an online calculator, available on the USDA website.

Along with Senators Baldwin and Smith, the letter was signed by Senators Rob Portman (R-OH), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Joni Ernst (R-IA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Bob Casey (D-PA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Angus King (I-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Jack Reed (D-RI), Bernie Sanders (D-VT), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

In the face of difficult dairy market conditions in Wisconsin and across the country, Senator Baldwin sent a letter to Senate leadership in January urging them to protect the economic security of the nation’s dairy farmers and update and expand the MPP in advance of the Farm Bill to provide better risk management tools for family farmers. In February, Senator Baldwin announced that she secured more than \$1 billion for MPP that includes significant improvements to dairy programs that will give Wisconsin dairy farmers much-needed, immediate relief. Enrollment for the improved MPP opened in April.

The full letter is available below. An online version of this release is available [here](#).

Dear Secretary Perdue,

We are writing to request that you provide a 30 day extension for re-enrollment in the Margin Protection Program (MPP) for dairy farmers from the current deadline of June 1, 2018. We understand that farmers are in the middle of spring planting season, many of whom are also dairy farmers. An extension would provide dairy farmers in our states the additional time needed to evaluate the MPP program and the changes that were made in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-123).

The MPP changes included in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 make a significant investment in the dairy industry that will help mitigate the serious challenges many producers are facing. We are thankful that USDA followed congressional intent and

implemented the new MPP retroactive to January 1, 2018. Data released by USDA is already indicating that many [small and medium sized] dairy farms enrolled in 2018 coverage will receive payments for the low all-milk prices during the earlier months of this year. Additional time for enrollment will give producers the opportunity to evaluate how the new program may work for their farm. USDA has provided similar extensions in 2014 and 2016.

Previous extensions have shown evidence that enrollment grows when the sign-up period is extended, and we urge USDA to continue further outreach and assistance in a farmer-friendly way should an extension be granted.

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of America's farmers and ranchers, and thank you in advance for considering our requests.