

U.S. Reps. Gallagher, Kind: Introduce bill to support family farmers and strengthen Wisconsin dairy

Posted on Wednesday, Sep 16, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Reps. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) and Ron Kind (D-WI) today introduced the Dairy Pricing and Policy Commission Act of 2020, a bipartisan bill that would establish a commission to help address the problems facing Wisconsin farmers. The commission, which would involve stakeholders from across the dairy industry, would be tasked with evaluating the difficulties facing Wisconsin dairy farmers and recommending solutions needed to help strengthen the future of Wisconsin dairy. Click [HERE](#) for bill text.

“While the Coronavirus exacerbated the challenges facing many Wisconsin dairy farmers, problems like low milk prices and declining farm income predated the pandemic,” said Rep. Mike Gallagher. “Now more than ever, it’s important that Congress does all it can to better evaluate these issues and improve the economic environment for these hardworking men and women. Bringing together experts across the agricultural, academic, and dairy industries is an important first step to help us do so, and I’m proud to join Rep. Kind in this bipartisan effort.”

“Wisconsin dairy farmers have been facing difficult conditions for years, with two farms a day closing even before the COVID-19 crisis,” said Rep. Ron Kind. “This week we were reminded that the status quo policies are not working for family farmers – with the nonpartisan GAO finding that USDA has dumped huge amounts of trade aid in response to the Administration’s trade wars toward large agribusinesses, particularly in the south, at the expense of our family farmers. It’s clear that we need to take a hard look at the factors creating struggles for our dairy industry, and then take action. To that end, I’m proud to introduce bipartisan legislation to create a commission and bring everyone to the table to identify the best options available to make sure our family farmers can succeed. Wisconsin dairy farmers are the heart of our rural communities, and I will continue to fight to ensure the future of America’s Dairyland is bright.”

“Wisconsin Farm Bureau applauds Congressman Gallagher and Congressman Kind for authoring this bill to allow the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to establish the Dairy Pricing and Policy Commission,” said Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Joe Bragger. “For too long Wisconsin dairy farmers have struggled with low and unfair milk prices. Additionally, this has had a harsh impact on rural communities. Farmers pride themselves on continuously improving their businesses. The same mindset should be put in place for the entire dairy economy. Our members support federal milk marketing reform, transparency in dairy pricing and would appreciate a close examination into our supply chain needs and possible disruptions. The Dairy Pricing and Policy Commission is needed to do just that.”

The Dairy Pricing and Policy Commission would consist of a broad coalition of dairy farmers, dairy processors, and other industry experts who would provide recommendations on some of the biggest challenges facing our dairy farmers today, including options on how to:

- Respond to the impact of dairy farm closures on rural communities
- Evaluate and identify challenges and opportunities for new markets for dairy exports
- Preserve competitiveness of American dairy producers and dairy products in global markets

Wisconsin has led the nation in farm bankruptcies for the past two years, underscoring the need to take substantive steps toward identifying and implementing critical reforms and ensuring dairy farmers have the tools they need to succeed.

Background:

In Congress, Rep. Gallagher has led efforts to support dairy farmers throughout this crisis. He's worked to ensure farmers have [fair access](#) to all of the federal funds made available in response to the Coronavirus, [called on his colleagues](#) to strengthen funding for the Milk Reimbursement Program, and asked USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue and HHS Secretary Alex Azar to [include whole milk](#) and other full fat dairy products in federal food programs.

Earlier this year, he [published a podcast](#) with stakeholders across the dairy industry to talk about the challenges they face and what Congress can do to support our farmers.