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Minnesota Farmers Union is Part of Group that is Granted Audience with Pope

St. Paul, Minnesota (March 25, 2015) – Five Farmers Union state presidents, including Doug Peterson, with Minnesota Farmers Union and National Farmers Union’s (NFU) chief counsel, David Velde, also from Minnesota, were granted an audience with Pope Francis today following a weeklong series of meetings with Vatican officials and rural-based non-governmental organizations.

Discussions surrounded the important role family farmer’s play in food security and the fact that most of the food produced in the U.S. is produced by family farmers.

Monsignor Peter Wells, assistant secretary of state for the Vatican, expressed concerns with the worldwide loss of family farmers, food security and environmental stewardship. “I’m pleased to hear the Vatican State Department’s belief that stewardship is ecumenical worldwide,” said Doug Peterson, president of the Minnesota Farmers Union.

Dave Velde, National Farmers Union (NFU) chief counsel, noted that the discussions that took place in Rome transcended all national borders and religious beliefs. “All religions are concerned about stewardship and the environment,” he said. “And this is a belief that can help unite a very divided world.”

The delegation also spent time with Caldoritti, the largest farm organization in Italy, the International Catholic Rural Association and the secretary general of the World Farmers Organization. These meetings are leading up to an international symposium of faith, food and the environment that will take place in Milan, Italy, June 24 to 27.

Minnesota Farmers Union (www.mfu.org), Standing for Agriculture, Fighting for Farmers.
