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Minnesota Farmers Union sees mixed results for agriculture in legislative session

ST. PAUL (June 16, 2015) – The Minnesota Legislature recently wrapped up the 2015 legislative session with mixed results for agriculture according to the Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU). MFU President Doug Peterson says that “MFU was pleased to see many of its top priorities enacted into law this year including strong investments in partnering with farmers through livestock investment grants and value-added projects, increased funding for state meat inspection and wolf depredation as well as the creation of new incentives for advanced biofuel and biochemical projects. “ Peterson also adds that “MFU was pleased that the legislature came together to adequately address the current outbreak of avian influenza.”

MFU was also pleased to see passage of some policy initiatives including the new Agritourism law which will offer some basic liability protection to farmers who invite the public to their farm, as well as Minnesota after many years adopt a program that will allow pilot projects for growing industrial hemp.

In addition, MFU was disappointed that even with a \$2 billion dollar state budget surplus the parties could not come together to offer some property tax relief to farmers or pass a comprehensive transportation bill. MFU will also be working with members and state agencies to assess the impact of the newly passed Governor’s buffer initiative which puts a timeline on existing law and will have farmers installing buffers of between 16.5 to 50 feet or using an alternative practice.

The next step in the policy process for MFU is our 50 plus county conventions that will be held later in the summer and early fall where farmer-members will have the opportunity to discuss legislation and suggest tweaks or initiatives for next year.

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