



**Minnesota  
Farmers  
Union** 

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## **Minnesota & National Farmers Union Make Their Voices in Washington, D.C. and the 2016 Fall Fly-In Comes to a Close**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 15, 2016) – Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) members joined nearly 300 fellow farmers, ranchers and rural citizens from across the country in Washington, D.C., Sept. 12-14, for the National Farmers Union 2016 fall legislative fly-in.

Minnesota Farmers Union fly-in participants were able to meet with several U.S. Senators and Congressman to be able to express their concerns and the need for change in the agriculture industry of the country in order to protect the future of family farmers. The concerns of farmers that were highlighted were:

- **The upcoming Farm Bill and protection for family farmers**  
*American family farmers are hurting even though they are the best producers in the world. Congress must not stand by and watch an entire generation of farmers be wiped out as a result of rock bottom commodity prices, rising input costs, and an inability to access needed credit.*
- **Opposing legislative changes to the RFS**  
*It is important that Congress oppose any legislative changes to the RFS and urge the EPA to increase their proposed RFS blending targets to statutory levels. RFS is good for the economy, good for the U.S. energy security eliminating reliance on other countries, and it is good for the environment.*
- **TTP**  
*TPP fails to address currency manipulation, a major contributor to the U.S trade deficit, and will end up increasing the real GDP by just 15 percent and will increase trade deficit of \$21.7 billion while only adding 128,000 jobs (the U.S. added 287,000 in June alone).*
- **Consolidation of the Ag industry with mergers of Ag suppliers**  
*Commodity prices are currently below production costs. Currently there has been a rush of corporate consolidation of agricultural input companies which leaves the farmer in a dire position on just about every aspect of their operation. Consolidation in agriculture results in increased costs for the farmer, increased cost to the consumer, less choices and competition in the industry and less innovation. This will lead to the consolidation of farmland and rural depopulation, a struggle that rural America is already feeling.*

“This is the opportunity that our members have to get in front of the representatives of Congress to help them understand the struggles that American family farmers go through.” said Doug Peterson, Minnesota Farmers Union President. “This is democracy at its finest, the voice of the farmer was heard in Washington D.C. during this visit, and it will make a difference”

In addition to Capitol Hill visits, MFU members were addressed by Tom Vilsak, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, who answered many questions that were brought forth by all members of National Farmers Union from all over the country to get the answers they needed.

Another major component of the fly-in was having the opportunity to present the Golden Triangle award to the key leaders who strongly support agriculture and family farmers, and have a 100 percent voting record with MFU & NFU policies. These leaders are Senator Amy Klobuchar, Senator Al Franken, Representative Colin Peterson, Representative Rick Nolan and Representative Tim Walz.

Members from Minnesota Farmers Union that will be participating in this year's NFU Fall Fly-In are: Ross Eischens of Minneota, Josh and Brooke Vickerman of Moorehead , Brian Rohrenbach and Linda Larson of Rosemount, Al Perish of Browerville, Eunice Biel of Harmony, Steve John and Jana Thormodson of Madella, Al Teich and Nancy Dahlin- Teich of North Branch, Jennifer Klabunde of Waubun, Michael Dohman of Breckenridge, Eric Hoese of Mayer, Stephanie Reynolds of Detroit Lakes, Noreen Thomas of Moorhead, Jennifer and Jacob Yost of Saint Peter, Gene Paul of Delavan, and Eric Sannerud of Ham Lake.

FFA students that attended were Camryn Larson of Fertile, Anna Olson of Fertile, with their advisor Witney Ruppecht of Fertile. FFA Essay winner Katie Benson of Staples, also attended with her father Stephen Benson of Staples and FFA advisor Kerry Lindgren of Staples.

Plus MFU staff: Doug Peterson MFU President of Madison; Gary Wertish, MFU Vice President of Renville; Rodney Allebach, Farmers Union Agency President and his wife Linda, of Otsego; Public Affairs Director Amanda Valencia of Forest Lake; Government Relations Director Thom Petersen of Pine City; Michelle Media, Director of Renewable Energy of Forest Lake; and Laura Sherar, Executive Assistant, of St. Paul.

*Minnesota Farmers Union—Standing for Agriculture, Fighting for Farmers*  
([www.mfu.org](http://www.mfu.org)).

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