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### **Minnesota Farmers Union sets 2017 Legislative priorities**

St. Paul, Minn. (January 3, 2017) – Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) with grass-roots input from its farmer-membership has set protecting agricultural portions of the state budget, addressing property tax and health care concerns, as well as addressing the struggling farm economy as top priorities for the 2017 legislative session which begins Tuesday January 3rd.

“MFU is hopeful that with the state budget surplus, legislators will be able to provide some property tax and health care relief for farmers”, said interim MFU President Gary Wertish, who added “MFU will be working with our farmers to ensure that rural Minnesota is represented in those discussions”.

Agriculture makes up a very small part of the state’s \$40 billion-dollar budget, yet agriculture makes up somewhere between 20-30% of the jobs and wealth in Minnesota. MFU will work to make sure that investments are made to help boost rural Minnesota and the farming sector. MFU will work to ensure sound funding for food safety, livestock, value-added, farm to school, energy, dairy, MN GROWN, sustainable and organic programs continue.

MFU also will continue to work on property tax relief, building on last year’s bipartisan effort to provide relief to farmers who face very high property taxes when school levies are passed for capital improvements.

Health care will also be a top priority for MFU this session with many farmers facing skyrocketing premiums, MFU will work to provide credits and other options for farmers such as opting into small groups, co-ops, or buying into MinnesotaCare.

Finally, MFU is urging the Legislature to act quickly to address bonding in the 2017 session, especially authorizing the bonding for the Rural Finance Authority (RFA) which makes loans to farmers and has run out of funds to make loans.

These are just some of the many priorities MFU will be working on follow MFU at our website or on our Facebook and Twitter feeds for more detailed Legislative issues.

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

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