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## **Lt. Governor Smith to Join Minnesota Farmers Union for Release of New Report on Rural Issues**

**Lt. Governor Tina Smith, Human Services Commissioner Emily Piper, and Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture Matt Wohlman** will join Minnesota Farmers Union President Gary Wertish for the release of a report documenting the results of 14 Minnesota Farmers Union Rural Issues Discussions titled: **What Do Rural People Think?**

### *Press Conference*

*Date: Wednesday, April 26, 2017*

*Capitol Press Corps Conference Room --- Minnesota State Capitol*

*Time: 11:00 AM*

Over the course of two weeks, Minnesota Farmers Union hosted 14 Rural Issue Discussions around the state, involving over 450 people attending and speaking up, and which included the Lieutenant Governor, and Administration Commissioners as listeners.

### **What are people talking about?**

- **Health care insurance costs, and health care access and availability**
- **Infrastructure – Roads, Bridges, Transportation, and Broadband**
- **Agriculture Issues, including property tax relief**
- **Hunger, and the need for more listening sessions by policymakers**

While many policy issues were raised, Minnesota Farmers Union has created a Call to Action for the Administration and the Legislature immediately in 5 areas:

- **Health care**
  - *Immediate reconsideration by the Minnesota House and Senate of a “public option,” allowing people to buy into Minnesota Care*
- **Listening**
  - *We call on the Governor, and the Legislature, to hold listening sessions and public hearings throughout the state on issues that impact family farmers and rural communities*
- **Agriculture Issues**
  - *Agriculture issue must be a high priority for the Governor and the Legislature. This must include property tax relief for farmers*
- **Hunger Issues**
  - *We call on the Governor and the Legislature to actively address issues related to rural hunger*
- **Infrastructure**
  - *We call on the Governor and the Legislature to actively address rural infrastructure issues of roads, bridges, and transportation, and especially broadband high speed internet as an essential service*