



HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

National Farmers Union was founded by ten family farmers in 1902 as the Farmers Educational Cooperative Union of America in Point, Texas. The first Minnesota Farmers Union chapter was organized in 1918 in Jackson County. After its founding, Farmers Union advocated for increased co-operative rights, fair market access for farmers, direct election of senators and voting rights for women.

The key to the success and credibility of the organization has been Farmers Union's grassroots structure in which policy positions are initiated locally. The policy process includes the presentation of resolutions by individuals, followed by possible adoption of the resolutions at the local, state and national levels. Members and staff of the Farmers Union advocate these policy positions nationwide.

1916 - NFU demanded a program of low-interest, long-term credit, resulting in the Federal Farm Loan Act, establishing 12 Federal Land Banks.

1921 - Successfully lobbied for the adoption of the Packers and Stockyards Act.

1922 - The Capper-Volstead Act, called the "Co-op Bill of Rights," is passed into federal law.

1925 - Over 2,500 Minnesota farmers march on State Capitol demanding legislative relief.

1933 - The Agricultural Adjustment Act and the Emergency Farm Mortgage, supported by the Farmers Union, become laws.

1936 - Twenty-nine new cooperatives are started throughout Minnesota, including in Roseau, Moorhead, and Crookston.

1943 - NFU advocated for making the National School Lunch Program permanent. Legislation doing this was signed into law by President Harry Truman in 1946.

1947 - The Minnesota Supreme Court rules that farmers have a right to market grain cooperatively on terminal markets.

1947 - Farmers Union leaders help organize a "Mercy Wheat Campaign" rally in Climax, Minn. Fiorella LaGuardia, former New York Mayor, is the featured speaker.

1947 - The first Farmers Union Insurance service offered to MFU members is the group health program.

1948 - Congress created the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), in a law strongly supported by the Farmers Union.

1949 - Minnesota Farmers Union hosts a bus trip to Washington, D.C., to talk with Congress members in their newly purchased vehicle. M.W. Thatcher, longtime farm cooperative leader and General Manager of the Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association meets with U.S. President Harry Truman.

1953 - MFU worked with the Minnesota Legislature to pass the "Extension Separation" bill, which made the Extension Service an independent entity.

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1953 - The first Rural Electrification Act telephone program begins operation in Minnesota. The first call was made from Lac Qui Parle Farmers Union officials to the National Office.

1955 - Farmers are now covered by Social Security, something that the Farmers Union had fought for since the 1930s.

1971 - Blocked efforts to eliminate USDA as a cabinet-level agency.

1973 - MFU joins a successful lawsuit to force the U.S. Department of Agriculture to continue farm disaster program payments.

1974 - NFU is included in the newly formed World Hunger Action Council, which worked to promote the development of rural health co-ops.

1976 - MFU develops a huge haylift to augment supplies in drought-stressed areas by transporting 130,000 tons of hay from nearby states.

1976 - Won authorization of the Small Business Administration to make loans to farmers.

1978 - Achieved adoption of legislation requiring foreign owners to disclose US farmland holdings. NFU also backed the creation of the National Consumer Co-op Bank.

1982 - NFU was influential in getting a portion of the military budget shifted to humanitarian food aid using commodity surpluses from the US.

1991 - Minnesota Legislature passes a law mandating 10 percent ethanol blend for gasoline. The bill was originally authored by Rep. Doug Peterson and Sen. Dave Frederickson.

2000 - 500 MFU members arrive in Washington, D.C., in seven motor coaches to attend the Rally for Rural America.

2016 - Agritourism law goes into effect protecting farmers from liability of participants partaking in agritourism. MFU provides each member a free sign protecting them from liability in an agritourism accident.

2016 - Minnesota Farmers Union hosts its first-ever Renewable Energy Working Session to discuss the importance of renewable energy and the potential it holds for family farmers.

2017 - Legislation allowing for health care cooperatives is passed by the Minnesota Legislature, which allows 40 Square Cooperative Solutions to begin operation.

2019 - Minnesota Legislature allocates the largest state investment in the Forever Green program through the University of Minnesota and USDA Agriculture Research Service. The Forever Green program develops new crops and high efficiency-cropping systems.

2020 - The COVID-19 pandemic revealed major fault lines in a consolidated agricultural industry. MFU renewed its focus on building a strong local food economy and supporting small and mid-scale meat processing plants. NFU launches Fairness for Farmers, a nationwide campaign fighting for stronger enforcement of antitrust laws and leveling the playing field for family farmers and ranchers.

2022 - MFU Foundation receives a \$2.9 million grant from the U.S. Commerce Department’s Economic Development Administration to support the purchase of mobile meat slaughtering and processing equipment.