NFU SUPPORTS CATTLE PRICE DISCOVERY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

In November, Senators Jon Tester (D-MT), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) announced a bill that would bring greater fairness to the beef marketplace: the Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act. The bill would mandate minimum levels of cash trading in cattle marketing regions, create a contract library for independent producers to consider, require packers to report cattle weights and deliveries for slaughter two weeks in advance, and strengthens the penalties for packers who violate these rules.

NFU, along with U.S. Cattlemen’s Association and American Farm Bureau Federation, supports the bill. NFU will work with these Senate leaders to press for swift passage of the bill.

NFU JOINS WITH U.S. FARM & BIOFUEL LEADERS URGING WHITE HOUSE TO EMBRACE HOMEGROWN SOLUTIONS, EXPAND ACCESS TO LOWER-CARBON, LOWER-COST BIOFUELS

In a letter to the White House, NFU and rural leaders noted that biofuels hold the power to “insulate consumers from volatile oil markets by extending the fuel supply, much like releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, but with sustainable results.”

To promote competitive prices while reducing emissions, biofuel and farm advocates also urged regulators to act swiftly on long-awaited biofuel blending requirements under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS).

NFU is proud to endorse a bipartisan, bicameral bill that would direct the convening of a national White House conference on food, nutrition, hunger, and health. The bill, introduced earlier this week, is led by Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), and cosponsored by Representative Jackie Walorski (R-IN) and Senator Mike Braun (R-IN).

The first and only White House conference focused on hunger and nutrition was convened in 1969. It led to landmark legislation and nearly a decade of transformational progress in the fight to end hunger in America—spurring the creation and expansion of programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program.

NFU SUPPORTS BILL TO COMBAT HUNGER AND NUTRITION INSECURITY IN AMERICA

As fiscal year 2022 gets underway, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is reminding farmers and ranchers to consider conservation program assistance through programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program. NRCS accepts applications for these programs year-round, but producers and landowners need to apply by state-specific ranking deadlines to be considered for this year’s funding.

If applications are received after ranking deadlines, those applications are automatically deferred to the next funding period. Applications must be completed through local USDA Service Centers.

NRCS conservation programs provide technical and financial assistance
NFU SENDS LETTER TO USDA IN SUPPORT OF CANOLA BEING APPROVED AS A PATHWAY FOR RENEWABLE DIESEL

“This Administration should continue to support increased growth of biofuel production under the RFS program, which, in turn, will support increased investments in the rural economy and help mitigate climate change impacts...Where canola oil can provide a sustainable, alternative feedstock for biofuel production today, we urge USDA to encourage EPA to take prompt action on the pending petition to approve canola oil renewable diesel fuels as “advanced biofuels” under the RFS program.”

ORGANIC AND TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (OTECP)

FSA has started accepting applications for OTECP, a new (likely temporary) program designed to help certified organic and transitional operations offset certain costs. Those costs include eligible certification expenses, eligible transitional expenses, educational event registration fees, and soil testing for micronutrient deficiencies. The $20 million devoted to this program for fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022 is part of USDA’s Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative.

FSA will accept OTECP applications for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 from through January 7, 2022. The application period for fiscal year 2022 applications will be announced later.

The Washington Corner can also be found at www.nfu.org/corner.