



WASHINGTON

from National Farmers Union

Corner

FEBRUARY 2013

Greetings from Washington! The National Farmers Union office is once again bustling with activity in preparation for our upcoming convention. If you haven't already done so, please make your arrangements to travel to Springfield, Mass., for the convention to be held March 2 to 5. The Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place has been designated as the 2013 NFU Convention hotel, and reservations need to be made by Feb. 7 in order to guarantee that you will get the Farmers Union discounted rate. For information on hotel reservations, convention registration and the tentative convention schedule, please visit www.nfu.org/convention.

FARM BILL UPDATE

On Jan. 1, Congress hastily passed **H.R. 8, the Tax Relief Extension Act**, commonly referred to as the fiscal cliff bill, which included a nine-month farm bill extension. Unfortunately, the extension only extends certain portions of the 2008 Farm Bill until Sept. 30, 2013. The legislation that passed

fails to provide essential disaster aid for farmers yet continues unjustifiable direct payments. The bill also does not provide mandatory funding for the energy title, specialty crops and organic provisions, or new important programs for beginning farmers and ranchers.

NFU President Roger Johnson expressed his disappointment with the extension, noting that, "Once again, Congress has left rural America out in the cold. An extension represents a short sighted, temporary fix that ultimately provides inadequate solutions that will leave our farmers and ranchers crippled by uncertainty."

The extension that was finally included in the fiscal cliff bill was not the version drafted by the chairs of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, but one that was developed by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., without input from agriculture leaders.

"Farmers, ranchers, rural communities and all Americans deserve better and would have been better served with a new five-year farm bill," Johnson noted. "It is truly a shame that the bipartisan work of both the Senate and House Agriculture Committees has been summarily and entirely discarded. Not only was that work far better than what has passed, it also provided meaningful deficit reduction.

NFU will continue to work with members of Congress and all interested parties during the next Congress to ensure that a farm bill can be completed as expeditiously as possible.

For an analysis of the provisions included in the act prepared by the NFU Government Relations department, please visit www.NFU.org/blog/?p=620.

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETS

The NFU Policy Committee met in Washington, D.C., Jan. 14 to 17 to begin revising our policy manual. This year's committee is comprised of **Jeff Eschmeyer** of Ohio (chairman), **George Davis** of California, **Tom Wingfield** of Colorado (representing Rocky Mountain Farmers Union), **Daniel Truelove** of Illinois, **Mary Howell** of Kansas, **Tim Velde** of Minnesota, **Ronda Throener** of North Dakota, and **Kent McAninch** of Oklahoma. The committee members are all outstanding leaders in their state/regional Farmers Union divisions and were nominated by their respective state's president to serve on the committee.

"The Policy Committee members play a vital role in carrying on the tradition of grassroots policy formation in

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our organization,” said Johnson. “The committee is tasked with reviewing our current policies and offering changes and additions for the delegates to vote on at our upcoming convention. This policy is what we will advocate for during the course of the next year.”

The committee heard from a number of White House, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Capitol Hill staff to ensure members have a broader working knowledge of current legislative issues as they revise NFU’s organizational policy. Speakers included **Doug McKalip**, senior policy advisor for Rural Affairs, White House Domestic Policy Council; **Jonathan Coppess**, chief counsel, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and **Krysta Harden**, chief of staff, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“Since Congress has not yet passed a five-year farm bill, the committee and convention delegates have another opportunity to have their voices and priorities heard,” said Johnson. “The policy will undoubtedly be focused heavily on that important piece of legislation and ensuring certainty for U.S. family farmers and ranchers.”

The January Policy Committee meeting is the first part of a two-step process. The second part of the process will take place during NFU’s annual convention in March. During the convention, any Farmers Union member may propose changes to the policy. The committee then considers those proposals and submits a final copy of the suggested policy to the elected delegates at the convention for their consideration, amendment and adoption.

FARMERS UNION BENEFITS
Did you know that as an NFU member, you have access to a score of benefits, including discounts on hotels, office supplies, prescriptions and even pet insurance!

Good News!
F a r m -
U n i o n
m e m b e r s
can save between 20 to 25 percent off of their next car rental from **Avis and Budget Car Rental.**

For a complete list of the many benefits available to NFU members, please visit NFU.org/membership/member-benefits.

NFU SEEKING SUMMER INTERNS

When can a part-time job change your life? When it’s a Farmers Union paid internship on Capitol Hill!

NFU is now accepting applications for its internship program. NFU’s internships typically last two months and may be tailored to the career goals of the individual. Internship areas of interest include communications, cooperative development, economics, education, membership marketing, policy research and political science.

Summer internships are two to three months in length with an *application deadline of Feb. 12, 2013.* Extended internships up to six months are available during the fall/winter/spring sessions.

For more information and to download the application, please visit www.nfu.org/education/internships.

Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.



**You know you want to farm.
We know what it takes.**

**NFU Beginning Farmer Institute
accepting applications until 2/11/13.**

Download materials at
<http://nfu.org/education/beginning-farmer-institute>



2012 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

The 2012 Census of Agriculture is being mailed to farmers and ranchers across the United States. Conducted every five years by the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Census provides detailed data of many facets of U.S. agriculture. It looks at land use and ownership, production practices, expenditures and other factors that affect the way farmers do business.

All farmers and ranchers should have received a Census form in the mail in early January. Completed forms are due by Feb. 4, 2013. Farmers can return their forms by mail or online by visiting a secure website, www.agcensus.usda.gov. Federal law requires all agricultural producers to participate in the Census and requires NASS to keep all individual information confidential.

NFU STAFF CHANGES

NFU is pleased to announce the addition of **David Thews** to its staff in the role of executive assistant. David’s pre-

vious experience includes working at a local Washington, D.C., community health center for the past four years. A native Minnesotan, David earned his B.A. in Social Work from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., in 2006. In his spare time, he enjoys running and singing in his church choir.

INTERNS JOIN NFU TEAM

The NFU office welcomed two interns to its ranks in January.

Amy Lesperance comes to NFU after earning a B.A. in Political Science from Asbury University in Wilmore, Ky. and a M.A. in Diplomacy and International Commerce with an emphasis in Agriculture Economics from the University of Kentucky's Patterson School in Lexington, Ky. Amy is passionate about increasing the reach of U.S. agricultural products, while improving world food security through appropriate agriculture practice and policies. This summer, Amy visited France and Argentina where she studied European production systems and regulations and economic and trade policies' effects on currency regimes, respectively. Amy hails from Winter Park, Fla. and enjoys triathlons, yoga and baking.

Anya Gandy returns to NFU for her second internship with the organization. She is a student at Antioch College in rural Ohio with a double major in International Agriculture and Rural Development and Agricultural Science. Her career interest includes working in agricultural policy, with a focus on the advancement of system conscious agricultural development and soil, water and producer sustainability. Coming from Talent, Ore., Anya sees her NFU internship as a wonderful opportunity to build on her experience on her family's 'Grumpy Goose' Family Farm, her Future Farmers of America experiences, and her academic studies. In her spare time, Anya enjoys running, riding sheep and welding.

STATE CONVENTION UPDATE President Johnson and the NFU staff continued to travel to many Farmers Union state/regional conventions during January, and will be attending more through February. It is always a pleasure to meet with members across the country and observe each state's policy discussion and adoption.

Utah Farmers Union was the first state to hold its convention in the new year, on Jan. 10 and 11 in Lehi. The keynote speaker for the UTFU convention was best-selling author, autism activist and consultant to the livestock industry on animal behavior, Dr. Temple Grandin. A longtime animal welfare advocate, Dr. Grandin has parlayed her talents into a successful career as a livestock-handling equipment designer, one of very few in the world. She has now designed the facilities in which half the cattle are handled in the United States, consulting for firms such as Burger King, McDonald's, Swift, and others. Dr. Grandin presently works as a professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University. She also speaks around the world on both autism and cattle handling. NFU President Roger Johnson was also in attendance to address the convention about national policy and legislative matters.

Upcoming state conventions include **Wisconsin Farmers Union** (Jan. 26

and 27 in Eau Claire); **Ohio Farmers Union** (Jan. 25 and 26 in Columbus); **California Farmers Union** (Jan. 26 in Hanford) and **Texas Farmers Union** (Jan. 25 in Abilene). NFU President **Roger Johnson**, NFU Vice President **Claudia Svarstad**, Vice President of Government Relations **Chandler Goale** and Government Relations Representative **Mike Stranz** will be in attendance at the various conventions.

WFO MEETS AT NFU HQ FEB. 6 TO 8

World Farmers Organization (WFO) leaders will meet at the National Farmers Union office in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 6 to 8. Robert Carlson, NFU vice president of international relations, serves as president of the WFO Board of Directors. While in Washington, the group will discuss agriculture policy ahead of its General Assembly scheduled for April in Japan.

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