



May 15, 2017

Dear Farmers Union member,

At this year's annual National Farmers Union convention, the delegate body passed a special order of business highlighting the challenges you are facing during the current farm crisis. We know that times are tough right now and that all of you are feeling this stress. As this organization has done on countless occasions over our proud history, we will stand together through these hard times. I want you to know that NFU is working hard to support you and make your voices heard in Washington and across the country.

I've already heard from many of you about the challenges you're facing to make ends meet. You're not alone in that struggle. Net farm income is forecast to decline another 8.7 percent in 2017, and median farm income is expected to fall below the cost of production. In fact, net farm income has fallen 50 percent since the record setting years leading up to 2013. It's not only you and your neighbors that are stressed right now; it's farmers and ranchers across the country.

NFU has spent the last two years highlighting the impact the declining farm economy has on family farmers and ranchers. We have provided written and personal congressional testimony, made annual requests for appropriations, led hundreds of meetings, and requested emergency assistance on numerous occasions. Those efforts have begun to yield positive results, as the Fiscal Year 2017 funding package includes an additional \$1.4 billion across the Farm Service Agency's loan portfolio and a \$500,000 increase for the Certified Agricultural Mediation Program. While this is a start, we know our work is not complete.

NFU has already been very active in discussions on the upcoming farm bill. On your behalf, I have submitted written testimony to the House Agriculture Committee ahead of five separate hearings on topics including access to credit, dairy, row crops and FSA's loan portfolio. NFU staff also holds nearly daily meetings with Congressional offices to find solutions for dairy and cotton farmers and to lay the groundwork for the next farm bill.

To provide more immediate support, NFU is starting a new campaign to connect you to resources and raise awareness about the challenges you are facing. We will be launching a new website farmcrisis.nfu.org to share resources that can be of use to you and your neighbors as you deal with the stress of another trying year. I encourage you to submit private comments to NFU staff when you visit the site, so we can better understand how to advocate for the relief you need. We have also

planned a series of listening sessions across the country to hear your concerns and better guide our work in Washington, so please look out for more details. I want you to know that you are not facing these tough times alone. The 200,000 members of National Farmers Union stand with you, and we are working hard to make your voices heard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roger" being more prominent than the last name "Johnson".

Roger Johnson
President
National Farmers Union