



WASHINGTON

from National Farmers Union

Corner

October 2022

With weeks until the 2022 Midterm Elections on November 8, Members of Congress are back in their states and districts hitting the campaign trail, vying for their chance to serve their constituents for another term in Washington. Capitol Hill should be a ghost town until November, which means any further legislative activity by this Congress is unlikely until the election is over – also known as the “lame duck” session.

Despite the connotation, NFU remains committed to pursuing our Fairness for Farmers priorities when Congress returns. In the meantime, NFU has been working closely with the Biden Administration on several of our shared priorities and is pleased to see our collaboration over the past two years continue to yield meaningful results.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON HUNGER, NUTRITION, AND HEALTH

On September 28, NFU President Rob Larew attended the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, which highlighted the Biden Administration’s goal to end hunger and increase healthy eating and physical activity by 2030.

In conjunction with the conference, the Biden Administration released a [national strategy](#) outlining actions the federal government should take to drive solutions around hunger, nutrition,

and health. The White House also engaged the private and nonprofit sectors and released a [fact sheet](#) outlining more than \$8 billion in commitments from the private and nonprofit sectors to address these issues.

The extensive national strategy includes many policy priorities and recommendations related to farmers, ranchers, and rural communities, especially around improving food access and affordability. Some of these priorities and recommendations include:

- Increasing access to free and healthy school meals for children, including during the summer months.
- Expansion of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

(formerly food stamps) to more underserved populations.

- Support for nutrition incentives for SNAP participants to purchase foods farmers markets.
- Support for local and regional food and farm businesses through grants and other financial assistance to provide nutritious food to schools, food banks, and other nutrition assistance programs.

President Larew [released a statement](#) in support of the conference and its vision and mission to end hunger.

CATTLE MARKET COMPETITION BILLS IN THE MIX

Two of NFU’s top Fairness for Farmers priorities – the Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act and the Meat and Poultry Special Investigator Act – could be part of legislative efforts before the end of the 117th Congress. Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) recently reiterated his hope the bills would pass this year, with the most likely timeframe being after the 2022





NFU President Rob Larew meeting with House Agriculture Committee Chairman David Scott

Midterms.

Both Sen. Tester and Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) have said Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) promised them a vote on the measures during the 117th Congress. During the Fall Legislative Fly-In, NFU members emphatically encouraged lawmakers to support these crucial pieces of legislation and get them across the finish line.

House Agriculture Committee Chairman David Scott (D-GA) has also introduced the Small Family Farmer and Rancher Relief Act, a different bill that would direct financial assistance, reduce risk management costs, and boost new marketing opportunities for very small-scale (less than 100 marketed animals annually) cattle producers.

NEW PSA RULE-MAKING, COLLABORATION BETWEEN USDA AND STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL

In late September, at a meeting of

the White House Competition Council, President Biden **announced** the latest Packers and Stockyards Act (PSA) rule. The President also announced the availability of funding for state attorneys general to partner with USDA on competition issues.

As USDA continues its work to strengthen the PSA, it announced the “Inclusive Competition and Market Integrity” proposed rule – the second of three proposed rules – which it expects to release soon. The proposed rule is expected to amend or update the PSA as follows:

- Revise regulations under the PSA by prohibiting certain prejudices and disadvantages against covered producers in the livestock, meat, and poultry markets.
- Prohibit retaliatory practices that interfere with lawful communications, assertion of rights, and participation in associations, among other protected activities—such as retaliating against a farmer or rancher for blowing the whistle on price-fixing.
- Identify unlawfully deceptive practices that violate the PSA with respect to contract formation, contract performance, contract termination and contract refusal.

In addition to announcing the



Minnesota Farmers Union President Gary Wertish, NFU President Rob Larew, and Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison discuss anti-trust issues

forthcoming PSA proposed rule, USDA announced it would continue efforts to ramp up enforcement of competition and antitrust laws by challenging state attorneys general to partner with USDA on competition issues in food and agriculture by using up to \$15 million in funds from the Consolidated Appropriations Act. USDA noted that “this initiative will improve state AG capacity to conduct on-the-ground investigations of competition issues, enhance coordination between Federal and state agriculture and competition enforcement authorities, create new and more independent research programs, and ultimately result in more rigorous enforcement of the competition laws.”

Several Farmers Union state divisions have already been building stronger relationships with their state’s top law enforcement leaders and this collaboration serves as a model for the President’s recent announcement.

access to the resources allocated to climate, conservation, and renewable energy; and to guide the USDA in enacting and appropriating the funds.

Members also encouraged their representatives to pass the Growing Climate Solutions Act to reduce barriers for farmers participation in carbon and environmental credit markets, and the Next Generation Fuels Act, which increases gasoline octane to a minimum standard through low-carbon, renewable fuels.