Looking for a summer job? Come work at Minnesota Farmers Union Camp!

If you love the outdoors and working with kids, Minnesota Farmers Union Leadership Camp may be the perfect place for you! Working at a summer camp is hard work, but it’s worth the effort. You’ll leave camp with unique skills, new friends and a ton of great memories. Our campers and staff become a community, and we work hard to ensure that everyone is having a fantastic summer camp experience. From leadership experience, team building exercises and more, our counselors gain important life skills from their first day of training to the last day of camp. Our counselors have FUN, but they also learn a lot about their skills and their passions. A summer at camp is truly an experience you’ll never forget.

A Minnesota Farmers Union Camp Counselor is responsible for planning, leading and implementing core and non-core programs and experiences for children in small and large group settings. They will also be responsible for the general safety and development, growth, and skill achievement of the participants in their group. The counselor will provide high quality outdoor educational and recreational experiences for participants that focus on the MFU core values of cooperation, leadership, respect and responsibility.

Required qualifications

- Education classes or experience in camp, youth programs, recreation, working with children or a related area.
- Upon hire, completion of MFU-provided First Aid and CPR certification.
- Ability to lead, plan, organize and implement program activities.
- Ability to work as a member of a team and the ability to accomplish tasks with little direct supervision.
- Strong organizational and communication skills.

If interested, contact MFU Education Director Glen Schmidt at glen@mfu.org or (651) 288-4066 for more information. Apply online at mfu.org/mfu-camp-staff-application.

Get Social With Minnesota Farmers Union!

Do you like to use Facebook, Twitter or Instagram to keep up with news you care about? You’ll find us there, too. Follow Minnesota Farmers Union on social media to find out about events, policy happenings, photos and more.

Facebook: Minnesota Farmers Union
Twitter: @mnfarmersunion
Instagram: mnfarmersunion

Tag us in posts we should see and we’ll like and share them.
Legislative session gets underway

The 2020 Minnesota legislative session is getting started, and we’ll be busy there. Our annual Lobby Day Drive-In is on Feb. 13, after the session kicks off on Feb. 11. I hope to see you there as we make our presence felt in St. Paul.

An issue that’s sure to be brought up again from our members is health care. Year after year, we’ve called for policy action that makes health care more affordable and accessible for everyone. Despite good efforts from many officials, including Gov. Tim Walz on his OneCare proposal last year, partisan arguments have prevented necessary improvements. The cost of health care is one of the most important issues for family farmers today, and I’m proud that MFU has been a leader in advocacy efforts about it.

Our Government Relations team will be at the Legislature every day during session to make sure rural Minnesotans are well-represented in policy discussions. In addition to health care, transportation funding, taxes and funding for the Rural Finance Authority will be major talking points for us as we meet with legislators and testify in legislative committees.

Government Relations Director Stu Lourey has a full list of 2020 legislative priorities on pages 6-7.

Staff updates

As you may know, we have had some staffing changes over the past several months. I’m pleased to inform you that Diana Rico has moved into the Membership Coordinator position and is working out of the state office. Please contact her with any questions on membership.

Also, Ken Pazdernik, our longtime Membership & Outreach staff member for District 1, consisting of northwestern Minnesota counties, retired in December. We wish him and his family all the very best and thank him for his years of service. Presently, Vice President Bryan Klabunde, who lives in Waubun, is covering membership and outreach for District 1.

Lastly, Molly Jansen is now titled Legislative & Operations Coordinator and will assist Stu in our work at the State Capitol. With her background as a legislative assistant and strong interest in agriculture policy, we’re glad to have her in that role as well as continuing with operations.

New president to be elected at NFU Convention

Recently, National Farmers Union President Roger Johnson announced that he will not seek re-election at this year’s NFU Convention, happening March 1-3 in Savannah, Ga. Roger has served since 2009 and has led the organization calling for fair trade agreements, support for farmers to help mitigate climate change and pushback against corporate consolidation in agriculture. He’s been a part of Farmers Union for his whole life, growing up on a family farm in North Dakota. I’ve thoroughly enjoyed working with him and am grateful for his service.

Roger’s term will come to an end at the conclusion of the NFU Convention. Three candidates have filed for the election to succeed him:

- Rob Larew, National Farmers Union Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Communications
- Donn Teske, Kansas Farmers Union President
- Mike Eby, chairman of the National Dairy Producers’ Organization

MFU’s delegates will be voting in this election, as well as debating NFU policy provisions. They’ve been instructed to represent MFU policy in this debate, so our organization as a whole is represented too. Our delegates will be:

- Erik Hatlestad, Kandiyohi County
- Brent Imker, Cottonwood County
- James Kanne, Renville County
- Sarah Hill, Mahnomen County
- Steven Koering, Crow Wing County
- John Larsen, Olmsted County
- Deborah Mills, Goodhue County
- Melissa Roach, St. Louis County
- Roger Schaefer, Becker County
- Harmon Wilts, Swift County

Trade deals leave Farmers Union cautiously optimistic

As you’ve probably heard, agricultural organizations around the country are applauding the recent passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and the “phase one” deal with China, a détente in the trade war. Farmers Union is also pleased that these agreements are being finalized, as they are positive signs toward normalizing U.S. trade relations around the globe. We need to restore our reputation as a reliable trading partner, which has been damaged by President Trump’s policies of pulling out of trade agreements and his use of tariffs.

There’s much remaining to be seen on how much these deals will benefit us. China has agreed to purchase $40 billion in U.S. ag products per year. That’s an increase from the $26 billion/year they’d been purchasing prior to the trade war. But the parties haven’t revealed purchase benchmarks for individual commodities, nor have the U.S. or China publicly committed to specific tariff reductions.

Additionally, it’s unclear how China will buy that much more of our ag exports. Since the trade war began, the Chinese have developed...
**Recycling is right for lights**

*by Emma Appleman, Center for Energy and Environment*

Where would we be without the humble light bulb? The simple device gave us the ability to brighten dark spaces, with countless implications for productivity, safety, and quality of life at all times of day and night. Recent decades have seen big advances in light bulb technology, with old incandescent bulbs getting out-paced by more efficient modern models like “light emitting diode” (LED) and “compact fluorescent lamp” (CFL) bulbs.

By installing LED light bulbs you can lower your electricity bills and energy use without sacrificing the lighting elements that make your home comfortable, inviting, and productive. These days, LEDs come in a wide range of color and hue options ranging from warm-toned to daylight, plus you’ll need to get at hard-to-reach fixtures way less often – even when used for a full 12 hours each day, an LED bulb should last about 11 years.

Whether you’re replacing inefficient bulbs or (eventually!) replacing better bulbs, you may wonder what do I do with my old light bulbs? Quick answer: Don’t throw them in a box in the basement, recycle them!

Light bulb recycling rarely gets the same attention as paper or plastic, but it is very important for our environment and our health:

- **The raw materials inside light bulbs can be reused.** Reusing materials (metal, glass, etc.) helps avoid the additional drain on energy and resources that would otherwise be required to make entirely new bulbs.
- **There are hazardous materials inside some bulbs.** For example, CFL bulbs contain mercury, which, if dumped into a landfill, could seep into ground water and contaminate drinking supply. CFL bulbs must always be recycled properly per Minnesota regulations.
- **Depending on where you live, it may be prohibited by law to throw bulbs in the trash.** Such laws exist to encourage reuse and protect against hazardous material contamination, as well as to avoid tossing more into already-overloaded landfills.

**So where can you recycle light bulbs?**

Check first with your local hardware store or municipal recycling center for light bulb recycling options. Depending on your location, you may have to pay a small fee but many areas recycle light bulbs free of charge. Interested in learning about more home energy saving actions? Check out [HomeEnergyHub.org](http://www.HomeEnergyHub.org) for tips and tricks to keep your home comfortable and efficient, even in Minnesota’s extreme climate.

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**President’s Message (continued from page 3)**

agreements for ag trade with other nations, including U.S. allies in Europe and Latin America, who would not be pleased to lose China as a market. The agreement looks good on paper, but many questions remain as to if and how China can make it work. We won't know the answers for at least another year.

Meanwhile, both Minnesota Senators, Tina Smith and Amy Klobuchar, voted “yes” on USMCA when it was approved in the Senate in mid-January. Smith announced her support for the agreement the weekend before the vote, visiting the Foley dairy farm of MFU members Carol and Steve Anderson. We thank Senators Smith and Klobuchar for their support. Sen. Smith put it well when she said the deal would not be “earth-shattering,” but that it does make modest improvements from the previous North American Free Trade Agreement.

Negotiations will continue with China in “phase two” going forward. There’s a long way to go before we reach the right deal. And, while it would be great if China purchases that much more in agriculture, reports have been skeptical about it. Analysts who study Chinese commodity flows aren’t sure the country can absorb that much from the U.S. without economic disruption. We’ll need smart negotiation for phase two – as well as support from our allies – so the impact of the trade war to U.S. farmers’ prices will be reversed in the marketplace.

**Rural Voices Discussions this spring**

I’m pleased to share that we are planning another series of Rural Voices Discussions this year. This event, which the late Bruce Miller and I started in 2017, has sparked statewide interest in the concerns of family farmers and rural residents. The objective of these discussions is to let attendees share what’s on their minds and be heard, rather than having someone talk at them. However, we do invite high-level officials to serve on the listening panels. We’ve had Commissioner of Agriculture Thom Petersen, Lt. Gov. Tina Smith, Congresswoman Angie Craig and National Farmers Union President Roger Johnson on the panel in recent years. State legislators and congressional staff often attend as well. This way, you can advocate on rural issues with policy makers, even if it’s too difficult to make it to St. Paul. Since we’ll be in the midst of the legislative session, that heightens the importance.

Our goal with the Rural Voices Discussions is to reach as many rural areas as we can, and we select a wide geography of places each year. If you have suggestions for places we should host discussions this year, please contact us. We are looking at March and April dates.
Greetings to my Minnesota Farmers Union friends. Winter is cruising along and before we know it the deep snow will start to recede and the birds will be chirping. It’s the change of season, it is inevitable, just like change happens at Minnesota Farmers Union. As we all know our organization, while runs as smooth as it ever has, faced a number of very challenging situations over the course of the last two years.

One recent change is the retirement of my dear friend Ken Pazdernik from the MFU Outreach Staff. Ken has been a dedicated Minnesota Farmers Union staff member and not only talks about the organization’s core values, he demonstrates these values in his daily life. He has been instrumental in my development in the organization. When I started as a county president, he was quick to contact me and start working future projects. So I want to thank Ken personally for not only his dedication to Minnesota Farmers Union, but also for his friendship. Ken and I have worked on many projects together, not only with our organization but have also worked on research projects in conjunction with the University of Minnesota Extension program. So, with this change, comes a bit of change for myself, living in the northwest part of the state gives me the opportunity to work closer with our membership. We are developing a plan on how this will look and are moving forward working hard and focusing on seeing what we can accomplish in District 1. While I will be spending a little extra time locally, this in no means will affect my outreach to the rest of our membership. I am working with our county leaders to make sure I fulfill my promise of connecting with local leaders and circulating the Farmers Union message.

Winter is the season for producers and industry leaders to have another kind of harvest, one of education and networking. With the start of the 2020 legislative session, our legislators are actively canvassing their districts gathering insight from constituents. I was able to attend a round table in Moorhead early in January with House Tax Committee Chair Rep. Paul Marquart regarding Section 179 reform. Farmers were not the only sector represented there, folks from the accounting and farm lending sector were also in attendance. The University of Minnesota did their Spring Wheat update across the northwest part of the state, which provided me several opportunities to connect with members and meet and recruit new ones. There are some great efforts going on in Crookston to build a large soybean crushing facility. Epitome Energy has been and will continue informational meetings along with fundraising efforts. It is an exciting opportunity for soybean growers in the region, who see the need for basis improvement in the area and this would be a great help.

I stopped in St. Cloud in the middle of January for the Northern Growers and Marketers Conference. This was well attended and very educational, and it was not hard to run into MFU members. Lastly, I attended the 2nd Annual Red River Basin Drainage Conference in Moorhead. The conference updated attendees on how Minnesota’s Red River Basin Mediation agreement is used to reduce flood risk and improve natural resources and explore how organizations and agencies in the basin work together to achieve shared goals. This meeting had information regarding regulatory law updates, the interface between public drainage and public waters regulation and general drainage management.

Many more opportunities upcoming this winter yet and I encourage you to get involved in your community, we need our members active not only with our organization but also active in all aspects of their communities. I will do my part to keep all of you informed on the issues of the day in communities across Minnesota. As always, feel free to contact me about our work at MFU. ▲
With the new year came a renewed focus on the next legislative session in St. Paul, which is set to begin on Feb. 11 and is scheduled to wrap up mid-May. In November, MFU’s family-farmer members updated their grassroots policy which provides the framework for our advocacy at the Capitol. Our 2020 legislative priorities are based on this policy, which relate access to credit, healthcare, taxes, biofuels, meat processing and other issues that affect family farmers and rural communities.

These priorities will be discussed during MFU’s annual Drive-In Lobby Day in St. Paul on Thursday, Feb. 13. We’d love to have you join us to advocate on these issues and help legislators understand the unique challenges and opportunities you’re facing on your farm. You can register by visiting mfulobbyday2020.eventbrite.com.

Top priorities we’ll discuss that day and throughout the session include:

- **Rural Finance Authority**: MFU strongly supports increased bonding for the Rural Finance Authority (RFA) at the MN Department of Agriculture (MDA). The RFA partners with local lenders to offer low-interest loans that help small and mid-sized farmers start and reinvest in their farm business. MFU also supports expanding the use of MDA’s Disaster Recovery Loan Program.

- **Health care**: MFU strongly supports initiatives that would lower the cost of health care for farmers and rural Minnesotans, including a public option that would allow farmers to buy-in to a MinnesotaCare-type program.

- **Prescription drug prices**: MFU supports legislation to lower the cost of prescription drugs, including insulin, recognizing the role that high drug prices play in increasing the overall cost of health care.

- **Agriculture budget**: MFU supports continued, strong funding for MDA, the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) and the Board of Animal Health (BAH). MFU opposes any cuts to agriculture programs funded by the Legislature in 2019.

- **Section 179 conformity**: MFU supports full conformity with Section 179 for equipment expensing.

- **Biofuels**: MFU supports the increased use of biofuels, including a move toward statewide E15.

- **Meat processing**: MFU supports working with regulators to address the backlog in meat processing for small-scale producers, particularly those using the state’s ‘equal to’ program. We also support making needed upgrades to the meat processing facility at the Northeast Regional Corrections Center (NERCC).

- **Education**: MFU supports funding for ag education at all levels, including 4-H, Extension and Farm Business Management programs. More specifically, we support:
  - creating a “supporting agriculture” license plate from which the proceeds support 4-H and FFA.
  - investing in ag education at UMN’s regional centers, including the organics facilities at the University of Minnesota-Morris.

- **Transportation Funding**: MFU strongly supports a long-term, sustainable plan to fund transportation. This includes a responsible increase to the state’s gasoline tax to pay for roads and bridges.

- **Broadband**: MFU supports investments in quality, high-speed broadband infrastructure that connects rural farms, families and business.

- **Industrial hemp**: MFU supports strategic state investments needed to sustain the states growing hemp industry.

- **Right to Repair**: MFU supports legislation that would allow farmers to fix electronic parts on their own equipment.

- **Cottage food**: MFU supports the cottage food law and efforts to streamline food licensing for small businesses that use agricultural products grown in Minnesota.

- **Ag emergency preparedness and response**: MFU supports efforts to protect farmers from emerging plant and animal diseases, including by making needed upgrades to MDA’s laboratory. MFU also supports the work of the Board of Animal Health (BAH).

(continued on next page)
The Minnesota Ag and Rural Leadership (MARL) Program is now accepting applications for Class XI. Individuals with a passion for agriculture and rural Minnesota, are 21 years or older, are leaders in their communities and are willing to have open-minded conversations are encouraged to apply.

MARL members will be expected to attend eleven seminars during the 18-month program. MARL Seminars are normally held from noon Wednesday to noon Friday, with some exceptions. The time commitment for seminars of MARL Class XI will be 21 days the first year and 24 days the second year. Nine seminars rotate around the state, one is held in Washington, D.C. in Year 1, and an international study seminar will be held abroad – destination TBD, in Year 2.

To apply, go to www.marlprogram.org/application by April 24. You can also nominate someone who you think is a good candidate for the program at this page and view the program schedule for Class XI.

MFU has had great representation in MARL since its inception. Programming Director Michelle Medina is a member of Class X currently, and President Gary Wertish was part of Class VII and Membership and Outreach Rep Peter Ripka was in Class VI. Many other MFU members have participated as well! Don’t hesitate to reach out to any previous class member and ask about it.

Minnesota Ag and Rural Leadership (MARL) Program

New intern Abby Penzenstadler

My name is Abby Penzenstadler and I am from Chisago City, Minn. Currently, I am a student at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, majoring in Agricultural Communications and Marketing and Applied Economics. With graduation on the horizon in spring of 2020, I’m looking forward to gaining more experience as an intern this semester. I plan to pursue a career that allows me to advocate and encourage involvement in the agricultural community through event planning, communications and outreach.

My passion for agriculture stems from my family’s hobby farm where we raise Hereford cattle and pigs. Throughout a vast majority of my life, I was heavily involved in the 4-H and FFA programs, exhibiting livestock across the state and involving myself in different leadership roles. For me, it was an easy decision to attend UMN and study agriculture. On campus, I am actively involved in Lambda Delta Phi sorority, Block and Bridle and Minnesota Royal. Plus, I recently completed my tenure on the UMN Livestock Judging team and look forward to serving as a judge at several county fairs in the future.

As a Minnesota Farmers Union intern, I’m looking forward to gaining a better understanding of the program, while being able to assist and learn from staff and members across our great state.
A monthly update from National Farmers Union

First phase of U.S.-China Trade Deal finalized

In an effort to ease the tensions of a two-year-long trade war, President Donald Trump and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He signed the first phase of a trade agreement between their respective countries. According to text made available after the signing, China will increase its purchases of American goods and services by at least $200 billion over the next two years. This includes $32 billion worth of agricultural products over an established 2017 baseline of $24 billion, bringing the annual average to roughly $40 billion. China will make several changes to facilitate these purchases. It has removed barriers that have previously hindered the importation of American products like beef, pork, poultry, seafood, dairy, rice, potatoes, blueberries, barley, avocados, alfalfa, hay, distillers’ grain, infant formula and pet food. Additionally, the country will accelerate its approval of agricultural biotechnology traits, which currently takes between 5 to 7 years. Under new regulations, the process will be shortened to about 2 years.

President Trump purportedly instigated this trade war to address China’s unfair trade practices, including currency manipulation and intellectual property theft. The deal includes some minor changes on both issues; China has agreed to strengthen legal protections for patents, trademarks, and copyrights as well as comply with preexisting intellectual property regulations and strengthen. Similarly, China has promised to uphold previously established currency commitments, refraining from “competitive devaluations and the targeting of exchange rates for competitive purposes.” The deal does not address government subsidies given to state-owned entities, though it may be included in an anticipated second phase deal.

National Farmers Union (NFU) was cautiously optimistic about the agreement, though maintained some reservations about its long-term implications. “It is a good sign that our two countries appear to have found common ground,” said NFU President Roger Johnson. “But this deal must deliver more than vague, unenforceable, short-term commitments – we need real and lasting behavioral change from China, and we need reliable and robust agricultural export markets.”

USDA releases new livestock competition rule

In response to anticompetitive and abusive business practices from the increasingly consolidated meatpacking and processing industries, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a proposed rule that would more clearly define when a company has shown “undue or unreasonable preferences and advantages” for one farmer over another.

The rule outlines four criteria for determining when an action has shown undue preference. An action may be permissible if it can be justified on the basis of meeting the terms or prices offered by a competitor, or if it can be justified as a “reasonable business decision that would be customary in the industry.”

Though NFU is encouraged by the administration’s efforts to address this issue, the organization is concerned about the final criterion. Lack of antitrust enforcement over the past several decades has enabled the poultry and livestock industries to engage in manipulative and discriminatory practices, making those practices customary. As a result, the rule could strengthen the status quo, leaving farmers with little recourse when confronting unfair but typical treatment. It’s unclear if the rule’s other provisions will provide needed protections to farmers.

Even if the rule does not enable bad behavior as feared, it does not go nearly far enough to protect farmers from the many other difficulties they have been suffering at the hands of powerful corporations.

“In order to provide farmers with the protections they need and deserve,” said President Johnson, “we strongly urge USDA to strengthen its definition of ‘undue or unreasonable preference’ as well as introduce additional rules to ensure fair treatment and competition in the livestock sector.”

NFU urges strengthening of conservation stewardship program

As USDA works towards 2018 Farm Bill implementation, the agency introduced the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) interim rule, which outlines how it plans to make changes to the program prescribed by the 2018 Farm Bill.

CSP, the largest work lands conservation program, provides financial and technical assistance for on-farm conservation efforts. The rule would make a handful of changes to the program. For one, it would increase payment rates for adoption of cover crop rotations from $200,000 to $400,000. Additionally, it would introduce a new supplemental payment for advanced grazing management as well as one-time payment for developing a comprehensive conservation plan. Finally, it would provide specific support for organic and transitioning to organic production activities.

NFU opposes USDA’s proposed increase in payment limits, as it would benefit the largest operations at the expense of smaller farms. In comments, President Johnson outlined his concern with the provision and made other recommendations to improve CSP. More specifically, he urged USDA not to penalize long-term stewardship by prioritizing first-time applicants; instead, applications should be ranked based on overall environmental benefits. Johnson also advocated that payments only be made to those actively farming, suggesting that USDA prohibit payments to cash-rent landlords. Finally, he requested that soil health be given greater consideration within the program, particularly given its importance to climate change mitigation and adaptation, water and air quality and crop yields.

(continued on next page)
FSA encourages producers to enroll soon in ARC or PLC programs
USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the Agriculture Risk (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. March 15, 2020 is the enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year. Although more than 200,000 producers have enrolled to date, FSA anticipates 1.5 million producers will enroll for ARC and PLC. By enrolling soon, producers can beat the rush as the deadline nears. Calling ahead can help farmers avoid long wait times during what will likely be a very busy time at the USDA office.

“FSA offices have multiple programs competing for the time and attention of our staff. Because of the importance and complexities of the ARC and PLC programs, and to ensure we meet your program delivery expectations, please do not wait to start the enrollment process,” said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. “I cannot emphasize enough the need to begin the program election and enrollment process now. Please call your FSA county office and make an appointment soon to ensure your elections are made and contracts signed well ahead of the deadlines.”

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms. The programs cover the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Until March 15, producers who have not yet enrolled in ARC or PLC for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office unless yield updates are requested. Additionally, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that take effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update and enrollments may be completed during the same office visit.

More information
The Farm Service Agency and University of Minnesota Extension have hosted a series of free education meetings to help crop producers understand decisions regarding the 2018 Farm Bill reauthorization of the ARC and PLC programs.

The seminars have been offered across the state, being held in 46 different counties and have been led by Extension educators and FSA; no registration is required. Details are available by going to z.umn.edu/2018FarmBill. Videos of the FSA and Extension presentations are also available at farmbill.umn.edu/.

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our program fact sheet or our 2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet available on the USDA website. Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

To schedule an appointment to enroll in ARC/PLC for 2019 and 2020, please contact your local FSA office.

Washington Corner (continued from page 8)

Senate Passes USMCA
The U.S. Senate voted 89-10 in favor of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), moving the trilateral deal to President Donald Trump’s desk for final approval. Mexico has already approved the deal, and Canada is expected to follow suit in late January.

Though NFU initially withheld endorsement when USMCA was introduced more than a year ago, the organization’s board voted to support it after the U.S. House of Representatives made several improvements, including stronger labor standards, more robust enforcement mechanisms, and some modest improvements to environmental protections, as well as partial elimination of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) arbitration procedure. Additionally, it omits a provision that would have inflated health care costs by granting pharmaceutical companies marketing exclusivity for certain medications for at least 10 years.

Though President Johnson was pleased with the Senate’s passage of the agreement, he was disappointed that it neither meaningfully addresses import dumping, which has depressed domestic commodity prices, nor does it reinstate mandatory Country-of-Origin-Labeling (COOL).

“There is still significant room for improvement,” Johnson said. “We urge Congress and the Trump administration to continue working to strengthen trade deals so they better support the success of family farmers and rural communities.”

The Washington Corner can always be found at nfu.org/corner.
Dori & Duane Klein, Wabasha County

Dori Klein didn’t grow up on a farm, but she was envious of her cousins who did. “I’d go there and get excited about picking up eggs and they’d think I was crazy,” she remembered with a chuckle.

Eventually she got her wish to have a farm with her husband Duane – and so much more. She retired from Minnesota Farmers Union’s Membership & Outreach Staff a year ago, where she extended her passion for the family farm beyond her own acreage.

“To be able to work with farmers was just unreal,” she said.

Thanks to all she did, Dori received the Dedicated Service to Farmers Union Award at the 78th Annual MFU Convention last fall. And she has desire yet to continue spreading the message of our organization as a member.

The path to MFU

Duane Klein grew up farming just north of Mazeppa. His father died when Duane was 16, so he took over the operation. That was where Dori moved to when she first married him, 54 years ago. They farmed grain, along with farrow-to-finish hogs and beef cattle. Dori got a degree in journalism and worked in education, in addition to farming. She worked as a career counselor at Red Wing Technical College, now part of the Minnesota State System, and in the state’s displaced homemaker program, supporting people who’d been divorced or separated.

But farming came first to her. “I always worked, but for me, farming was always what I did,” she said. “That was where my interests lied.”

Dori and Duane ended their hog operation after Duane was badly injured in a car crash in the 1980s. They then moved to their current acreage in Zumbro Township, on the Zumbro River bottoms, which they’d been renting already. The Klein farm consists of 550 acres today, although many of those acres are covered by woods.

It was an ad in the Rochester Post-Bulletin newspaper that first sparked Dori’s curiosity about MFU. She first saw it a number of years before she was hired, but the timing wasn’t quite right. Then, later on, funding was cut for the displaced homemaker program and Dori was laid off.

“And lo and behold, there was a posting again for MFU,” she said. “So I pursued it. At that time, they hired two of us. (The other was) Merlin Mathiason from Rochester. He passed away from cancer (in 2009). We covered Southeast Minnesota and we were both part-time, dividing the counties.”

This was in 2006. Dori and Duane had become members before then, thanks to Wayne Boettcher. They appreciated MFU’s commitment to the family farm way of life.

“At that time I was interested in farm policy and had gone through the 1980s, so I had been attending meetings, like one at the Oak Center Store with Sen. Paul Wellstone.”

Retired MFU Outreach staff member Dori Klein talks with member Mike Clemens at a 2018 Rural Voices Discussion

‘It’s all about the members’

As a membership & outreach worker, Dori’s main focus was to recruit new members to MFU and remind current ones to keep their membership up-to-date. But it wasn’t just about getting dues checks.

“I really enjoyed meeting and talking to other farmers, going to their place, finding out about their operation, what was important to them,” Dori said. “It was the connection. Sometimes it would be frustrating, spending a whole day driving around and not getting any new members. Then one time on a staff retreat we had a speaker who was in sales. He said it takes 6 or 7 interactions before someone is willing to buy something.”

She knows the country roads of southeast Minnesota better than most people, thanks to her hard work. And she didn’t always have the convenience of a smartphone app for directions.

“Wabasha County was one of the last counties to get rural addressing,” she added. “But they’ve rectified that.”

Many of you may be familiar with Dori’s initiative with on-farm day camps in southeast Minnesota, usually on dairy farms. She was motivated by the value that’s the base of the Farmers Union triangle.

“The opportunity for education, educating people about farming,” she said. “So many kids now have no connection to farming.”

The day camps on dairy farms have been a major success. The excitement of the kids to get to see farm animals, as well as their parents or grandparents who may have grown up on farms themselves, brought Dori great joy.

“Livestock are a lot of work, but they’re fun for kids.”

What’s next?

Dori and Duane continue to be active members of MFU. Dori attended the 78th Annual MFU Convention as a delegate for Wabasha County, the first time she’d done that.

“It was a bit strange,” she said. “I felt like I should be doing something. But now I can express my opinion on state policy.”

Dori’s had some health challenges to deal with in the first year of her retirement, but she’s doing well and stays as active as she can. She’s still the clerk of Zumbro Township and is thinking of other ways she can contribute to Wabasha County Farmers Union in the future.

Meanwhile, she’s staying engaged on rural and agricultural policy issues.

“I’m upset about the tariffs,” she said. “It’s not helping us. We got the Market Facilitation Payments, but farmers don’t want that. They want a fair price.”

“I don’t think we’ll get the market back to where it was before,” Duane added.

The lack of fair prices on the farm, particularly in dairy, have driven changes in rural southeast Minnesota. Duane recalled when he used to test milk with the Dairy Herd Improvement Association, the biggest dairy in the county was about 70 cows. Now that’s considered tiny. The Kleins have witnessed the loss of many family dairies in the county,

(continued on next page)
NFU WOMEN’S CONFERENCE RECAP

It was an honor to spend the conference getting to know these Minnesota women better: Eunice Biel, Naima Dhore, Irmadene Hanson, Andrea Koller, Linda Larson, Nanci Lilja, Deborah Mills and Noreen Thomas.

Topics covered included a lesson about the role of co-ops in agriculture, how to have a legally resilient work program on your farm, how to create a farm business plan, managing safety and stress on the farm, a Plate to Politics session on running for office and more. Of note were the keynote speakers on Monday evening: Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture Kate Greenberg and Oregon Director of Agriculture Alexis Taylor. Both were women under 40 and they discussed how they came to be in their roles as well as what was happening in agriculture in their respective states.

My favorite part about the conference was the opportunity to learn from and network with fellow women in agriculture, both my fellow Minnesotans and women from all over the country. There were women in attendance from a wide variety of agriculture backgrounds from more than 10 other states. I strongly encourage any woman who is interested in attending next year to do so. MFU offers five scholarships with preference given to members that have not received one before or have not attended a previous NFU Women’s Conference.

The dates for next year are Jan. 19–21, 2021 in Nashville, Tenn., venue to be announced.

DIANA RICO, MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR
diana@mfu.org

The National Farmers Union Women’s Conference took place January 19–21 in San Diego, California. We awarded five scholarships for Minnesota women to attend, and all five were present in addition to three more Minnesota women and myself as a representative for MFU for a total of nine attendees from Minnesota – the highest amount of attendees of any state other than California.

Members in Focus (continued from page 10)

an all-too-common trend across the country.

On health care, the Kleins are lucky to be 15 miles from Mayo Clinic in Rochester. They know not everyone is that lucky.

“In other rural areas, their hospitals are closing and their doctors are moving out,” she said. “That’s got to be pretty scary. It’s kind of the same thing with police. We’re at the western end of Wabasha County. I used to volunteer with a women’s shelter, and if you were having a domestic violence issue on this side of the county, it took a sheriff’s deputy from Wabasha 45 minutes to get to you.”

Sometimes, a struggle in membership work is encountering people weary of politics. But Dori understands as well as anyone that farmers need to be involved, because politics affects so much of what we experience.

“I don’t think you realize it unless you get involved with an organization,” she said. “I think it’s important for farmers to be members of farm organizations, get your voice heard.”

And of course, for the Kleins, that organization is MFU.

“I belong to Farmers Union because they still believe in the family farm,” Dori said. “I really appreciate our members and enjoyed working with them. And I believe in our policy.” ▲

MFU seeks input on Rural Voices Discussion locations

For three years, MFU has organized several very successful Rural Voices Discussions, allowing hundreds of members and other people across the state to voice their opinions and concerns on the issues impacting them as family farmers or others in rural Minnesota.

As we prepare for conducting additional sessions in 2020, we would like to hear from you if your county would be interested in hosting a session. We would need your help to find a venue that can hold 50-75 people, has a room that we can set up theater-style, is low/no cost and where we can serve milk, coffee and refreshments.

If you have ideas for a location, please contact Membership Coordinator Diana Rico at diana@mfu.org or (651) 288-4060. ▲
MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Building our grassroots membership through active counties

Active local and county Farmers Union organizations are key puzzle pieces in creating Farmers Union’s grassroots success. At both the state and national levels, Farmers Union is greatly appreciative of the efforts by our locals and counties and wishes to recognize those groups demonstrating leadership in their communities.

It takes even more effort to keep our counties viable in today’s hectic world. We compete with so many other events and activities, and it seems as if we’re all time-challenged.

But having a local connection is something our members cherish and support.

To gain state and national recognition, there is a Leadership Achievement Award with National Farmers Union for counties for building our grassroots membership.

Those selected for the award will receive recognition for their work.

What does a county have to do to qualify?
1. Hold at least four meetings per year
2. Have your county organization represented at a minimum of two state and/or national meetings a year
3. Participate in or conduct at least two community activities or programs during the calendar year
4. Have your county organization represented during the calendar year at one local and/or state cooperative organization function
5. Have a membership increase over the previous year

Every MFU county that achieves a NFU Leadership Achievement Award will receive a certificate from NFU and other rewards for their work.

For questions on how your county can meet these criteria, please contact Membership Coordinator Diana Rico at diana@mfu.org.

Membership Incentive Programs

Want to help build Minnesota Farmers Union and earn a little money doing so? Take part in the Membership Recruitment Reward Program.

**Individual Member Bonus Payments**

Any member of MFU who helps renew memberships or recruit new members is eligible for the Individual Member Bonus Program.

A recruiting member will receive $7.50 for every one year membership and $12 for every two or three year membership. This applies to both new and renewing memberships. To encourage the recruitment of new members, each recruiting member will receive an additional $3 for new members recruited.

Incentive payments are mailed to recruiting members in the spring of the following year after all memberships have been processed for the year and annual MFU membership is certified.

Do you need a membership book? MFU updated membership slips to include additional information needed to process payments. Please contact the office to receive your up-to-date membership books and track your recruitment.

**2020 Rider Program**

Any recruiting member who accompanies a MFU staff member on recruiting visits is eligible to earn the incentive fees as outlined in the Individual Member Bonus Program. Riding with another MFU member also makes you eligible for the Individual Member Bonus Program. There is nothing better than working with friends and building membership while getting recognition and some extra cash.

We welcome members to work with staff and other Minnesota Farmers Union members to recruit new members and to encourage current members to rejoin MFU.

On the bottom of the membership slip, make sure to add your name as the rider! This is how MFU staff track your incentive payments from the Individual Member Bonus Program.

**National Farmers Union Star Awards**

MFU members who actively recruit new members are eligible for awards from NFU: the Blue Star and Silver Star. You can earn points towards these Star awards each time you sign up a new member, plus get other gifts along the way. Here are the awards:

- 15 points – Farmers Union shirt
- 20 points – $100 credit toward any Farmers Union event registration: state or national convention, camp, Fly-in or other educational program
- 25 points – $200 Cabela’s gift card
- 40 points – The Blue Star Award! Blue Star lapel pin and a $350 Cabela’s gift card
- 50 points – The Silver Star Award! The historic Silver Star lapel pin for outstanding leadership in membership recruitment, plus a $500 credit toward any Farmers Union event registration or $350 Cabela’s gift card.

Here’s how the point system works:

- One-year renewals: 1/2 point
- One-year new memberships: 1 point
- Multi-year membership renewals: 1/2 point per year renewed
- New multi-year membership: 1 point per year signed up for

All awards are based on Membership Recruitment conducted between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31 of each year. MFU staff are not eligible to participate in these programs. For more information or to participate, please contact Membership Coordinator Diana Rico at diana@mfu.org. Membership forms and materials will be sent to you.
Once again, it’s that time of year, time to start thinking about summer! MFU summer camp season is just around the corner. Minnesota Farmers Union is looking for exception young people, 18 years of age or older, to lead camp and make it a great experience for all those involved.

Camp staff
A Minnesota Farmers Union camp counselor is responsible for planning, leading and implementing core and non-core programs and experiences for children in small and large group settings. They are also responsible for the general safety and development, growth and skill achievement of the participants in their group. MFU counselors provide high quality outdoor educational and recreational experiences for participants that focus on the MFU core values of cooperation, leadership, respect and responsibility. If anyone you know is interested in the opportunity to be a MFU camp counselor, please have them contact me at glen@mfu.org.

• Rice County Farmers Union has a long history of sponsoring scholarships not only within Rice County, but also to students across the state. Scholarships from Rice County Farmers Union are available to MFU family members that plan to attend or are currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution of any kind.

• Howard Warmbold was a lifetime member of Hubbard County Farmers Union and was an extremely active person in his community. The Howard Warmbold Memorial Hubbard, Beltrami and Wadena County Scholarship is available to MFU members or their children who reside in Hubbard, Beltrami or Wadena County and plan to attend or are currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

• Kandiyohi County Farmers Union also offers a scholarship to any MFU member or their child who resides in Kandiyohi County.

NFU also offers many scholarships, such as the Stanley Moore National Scholarships, the Hubert K. & JoAnn Seymour, and the Stanley Moore FUI Foundation Regional Scholarships. Please visit nfu.org/scholarships for more information on these scholarships.

Please encourage any student about to start their post-secondary education or currently attending to visit mfu.org/scholarships to apply or for more information.

Summer camp registration

Once again, it’s that time of year, time to start thinking about summer! MFU summer camp season is just around the corner. Minnesota Farmers Union is looking for exception young people, 18 years of age or older, to lead camp and make it a great experience for all those involved.

Camp
Mark your calendars, registration for Minnesota Farmers Union summer camp opens March 1 at www.mfu.org/camp. Register before May 1 for early bird pricing.

Camp is where kids can hang out, be kids and have fun. MFU prides itself on keeping camp affordable and open to everyone. During a week at camp children can sing at campfires, dress up in crazy costumes for theme nights, swim, play games, go on nature hikes and much more! Reasonable rates are made possible through grants and financial support from the MFU and CHS foundations.

For more Information and to register go to: www.mfu.org/camp.

2020 weeklong camps:

June 15-19 (Mon.-Fri.): Northern Elementary Camp (ages 8-11) • Lake Sarah Campground, Erskine
June 22-26 (Mon.-Fri.): Northern Junior Camp (ages 11-14) • Lake Sarah Campground, Erskine
July 14-18 (Tue.-Sat.): Southern Elementary Camp (ages 8-11) • Sibley State Park, New London
July 20-24 (Mon.-Fri.): Southern Junior Camp (ages 11-14) • Sibley State Park, New London
July 26-31 (Sun.-Fri.): Statewide Senior High Camp (ages 14-18) • Sibley State Park, New London

2020 day camps:
June 8-12 and July 6-10 • locations around Minnesota
Lake Country Lamb Chops
Bunkowski Farm & Spanky’s Stone Hearth

Yields 2 servings

- 4 rib lamb chops
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 oz. fresh mint leaves
- 3 oz. fresh rosemary sprigs
- 1 Tbsp. coarse grind black pepper
- 1/2 oz. fresh thyme
- 1 Tbsp. white wine
- 3/4 cup mint jelly
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 3/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 cup Worcestershire
- 1/2 cup brown sugar

Coat both sides of lamb chops in olive oil, mint leaves, rosemary and black pepper. Set aside in cooler for 2–4 hours.

In stockpot sauté thyme in white wine until fragrant; add mint jelly and cream. Whisk until completely blended and smooth. Take off heat and set aside.

In a stockpot boil balsamic vinegar and Worcestershire down by half, then add brown sugar. Reduce until a thick band forms around whisk. Set aside.

Cook lamb chops over charcoal for 3 minutes on each side or until medium rare. To serve, place 2 Tbsps. mint jelly in the middle of a serving plate and whisk in balsamic around edges of mint jelly. Place lamb chops around sauces and serve.
Look for MFU at these upcoming events!

MFU will have a presence at several conferences, conventions and meetings coming up in the winter. Members are welcome to help us staff the booths during the events. If you are interested in doing this, contact Legislative & Operations Coordinator Molly Jansen at molly@mfu.org. Or, come and say hello and get some MFU swag!

Feb. 13 MFU Lobby Day Drive-In
Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul

Feb. 17 Carver County Dairy Expo
Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul

Feb. 19-20 International Crop Expo
Central Minnesota Farm Show, Norwood Young America

Feb. 25-26 Central Minnesota Farm Show
Riverview Convention Center, St. Cloud

Feb. 27-29 MOSES Organic Farming Conference
La Crosse Center, La Crosse, WI

Mar. 1-3 National Farmers Union 118th Anniversary Convention
Savannah, GA

Mar. 5 Soil Health Conference
Oliver Farm, Elk River

Mar. 11-12 International Sugarbeet Institute
Alerus Center, Grand Forks, ND

Mar. 19-21 North American Farm and Power Show
Steele County Fairgrounds Park, Owatonna

Apr. 8-9 AURI New Uses Forum
Earle Brown Heritage Center, Minneapolis

Apr. 19-21 MN State FFA Convention
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

MDA Produce Safety Program

FSMA Produce Safety Rule Grower Trainings through April 2020

Register now for the upcoming grower trainings brought to you by the MDA Produce Safety Program and the University of Minnesota Extension along with other partners. Attendees will learn food safety practices, Produce Safety rule requirements and answers to questions about the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety rule.

If your farm is not excluded or exempt from the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety rule, at least one supervisor or responsible party from your farm must complete a training course that uses FDA-recognized curriculum or an equivalent. The MN grower training course meets this requirement. The cost for the training is currently subsidized at $35 per attendee. For more information on dates and locations of the Grower Trainings and to register online, please visit mda.state.mn.us/growertraining.

Restriction on use of Dicamba herbicide for 2020

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced a state-specific restriction for the use of the herbicide dicamba in Minnesota for the 2020 growing season. Dicamba used on dicamba-tolerant soybeans will have a cut-off use date of June 20, 2020.

The 2020 Minnesota restriction is in addition to those established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The affected formulations are XtendiMax by Monsanto, Engenia by BASF, FeXapan by DuPont and Tavium by Syngenta.

The decision follows the MDA’s ongoing investigations and informal surveys into reports of crop damage from alleged dicamba off-target movement over the past three growing seasons. In 2017, the MDA received 253 reports of alleged dicamba drift.

Those reports impacted an estimated 265,000 acres. After a June 20 cut-off date was put in place, the number of complaints dropped dramatically to 53 reports in 2018, which affected just over 1,800 acres, and 22 reports in 2019 that impacted approximately 760 acres.

“Dicamba is an important tool for combating herbicide-resistant weeds in dicamba-tolerant soybeans,” said Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. “The MDA wishes to preserve this tool for farmers; however, it’s also important to limit impacts on neighboring homes, farms and gardens. We have seen continued improvement of the use of these products because of the June 20 cut-off date, and that’s why we are moving forward with this again in 2020.”

The June 20 cut-off date for the 2020 growing season was established after the review of survey results and peer reviewed literature and input from University of Minnesota Extension weed scientists.

Cutoff date: Do not apply after June 20, 2020. Setting an application cutoff date of June 20 is again expected to help reduce the potential for damage to neighboring crops and vegetation. Most Minnesota soybeans are still in the vegetative growth stage by June 20 and research has shown that plants in the vegetative stage are less affected than those in the reproductive stage.

In Minnesota, the XtendiMax, Engenia, FeXapan and Tavium formulations of dicamba are “Restricted Use Pesticides” for retail sale to and for use only by Certified Applicators.
Now is the time to start thinking about your MPCI coverage. The March 15th submission deadline will be here before you know it!

Our Agents have access to many companies with competitive rates and prices to better serve your needs, so if you need quotes for your farm and equipment, we can do that, too!

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ST. LOUIS PARK
Cary Sundlof (651) 288-4069

ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY
DAVID MCCOLLUM
651-582-8000

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