

We're working with lawmakers for you!



2017-2018 Legislative Priorities

Labor Security

Dairy farms face a shortage of workers. There are multiple reasons, including a shrinking rural workforce and difficulty recruiting native-born employees. Our farms have come to rely more on immigrant labor. There needs to be a way for farmers to protect their existing workforce while also having opportunities to hire new foreign workers that are legally authorized to work. The current agriculture visa only permits seasonal employment. Several proposals would help, such as the expansion of the current ag visa criteria, the creation of a new long-term ag visa or the delegation of some visa powers to states. Edge will be supportive of any of these improvements.

Better Access to Global Markets

It is no coincidence that record milk prices coincided with strong dairy exports. A steep decline in prices followed a contraction of exports. One of the best things the dairy community could do to ensure higher and more stable pricing is to grow our place in the global market. Edge wants to safeguard the gains for agriculture made by agreements like NAFTA while also promoting new agreements that would give farmers and processors better access to foreign markets. We also fought non-tariff trade barriers proposed by the Canadian government. Freer and fairer trade is in our best interest.

An Effective Farm Bill for Dairy Farmers

Federal dairy programs can greatly affect our dairy farmers' ability to earn a living. Our farmers want to utilize tools our government provides for success, but it is important these programs do not waste our farmers' or the nation's resources. Edge's involvement in the Farm Bill process is essential to ensuring we have highly functional programs for dairy farms that are easy for all types of farmers to use. One of our top priorities for the coming Farm Bill is a reevaluation of dairy risk management programs. We must insist that the investment in dairy programs reflects our large economic impact.

Overregulation by the EPA

Since its creation in 1970, the Environmental Protection Agency has helped to improve the environment. But, it also has created ever more burdensome regulations. The new Waters of the United States rule and Clean Power Plan are examples. Both are being challenged in court but their implementation would have a significant impact on farmers. Edge will continue to fight for reasonable regulations that consider the increased burden they could place on businesses like our farms.

Stop the Mislabeling of Non-Dairy Products

Store shelves are full of so-called almond and soy "milk." The number of products made from plants that attempt to mimic dairy foods is expected to only grow. There may be room for everyone in the marketplace, but it is wrong to mislead customers. The dairy community and our check-off programs should ensure that the public understands how these new items are nutritionally inferior. Some of these non-dairy imitations already violate existing labeling laws. Edge is pressuring federal agencies to enforce the laws so customers are protected and dairy foods are not unfairly disadvantaged.

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