

2006 OYDCs Attend NMPF Meeting in Washington, D.C.

by Tom and Dianne Cook
2006 MMPA OYDC

During the first week of June we had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. to attend the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) Dairy Policy and Legislative Forum.

As part of the NMPF Young Cooperator Advisory Council, our first meeting was to help finalize plans for the NMPF Annual Meeting to be held in Orlando, Florida in mid-November. Later that day we had dinner with the NMPF staff and officers where we had the opportunity to sit with Chris Galen, NMPF Senior Vice President of Communications, and discuss some of the latest NMPF recommendations regarding the 2007 Farm Bill. This allowed us to get a better understanding of some of the key issues and topics prior to our visits on Capitol Hill on Tuesday.

On Monday evening, along with our fellow YC couples, we took a walking tour of the monuments.

Tuesday started with more updates and briefing on the latest issues facing our senators and representatives. They focused on immigration reform and the 2007 Farm Bill.

Along with Sheila Burkhardt and another couple from Michigan, we met with Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) and his legislative assistant. We continued on to the offices of Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Senator Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and met with their legislative aides. During our meetings, we emphasized the importance of immigrants to the dairy and agriculture industry. We also stressed the importance of the dairy portion of the 2007 Farm Bill and the importance of the dairy industry to

the state of Michigan.

Following our visits on the Hill, we went to the galleries for both the House and the Senate and had the fortunate opportunity to see both of them in session.

We then attended Dairy Day on Capitol Hill, a special evening reception for legislators, their staff members and U.S. dairy producers.

Wednesday capped off our visit to Washington D.C. by attending the NMPF Board of Directors Meeting. We heard from Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-Calif.), member of the House Agriculture Committee, and Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. They discussed the progress of the 2007 Farm Bill and the immigration reform legislation. During the meeting, NMPF staff members also gave updates on the various issues they are working on.

Following the NMPF board meeting we spent the rest of the afternoon visiting Arlington National Cemetery, dined with other Young Cooperators from all over the country, all the while getting better acquainted and making new friends. We look forward to this fall when we will be seeing them again.

We truly enjoyed the opportunity to represent MMPA and NMPF.



Tom and Dianne met with Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) during their trip to Washington D.C.

It gave us more appreciation for all the hard work that needs to be done by all of us to help educate our legislators.

NMPF YC Policy Forum

The NMPF YC Policy Forum takes place each June, allowing members of the NMPF Young Cooperator Advisory Council to participate in a policy and legislative forum. This meeting gives the YC's hands-on legislative experience through Capitol Hill visits with their elected officials.

The YC's are also able to participate in Dairy Day on Capitol Hill, a yearly reception hosted by NMPF where the YC's can meet legislators from across the nation.