



Legislative Watch

Issues important to today's dairy farmers

Senate Farm Bill Contains Many NMPF Priorities

— House, Senate Leaders Must Now Reconcile Different Farm Bills in Conference

The Senate passed its version of the 2007 Farm Bill December 14 by a wide margin of 79-14, and the measure “contains many of the priority items sought by the National Milk Producers Federation,” said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of NMPF.

The dairy portions of the bill generated little controversy, compared to other, more contentious issues, such as farm payment limitations. The Senate measure mirrors the House bill’s language substantially revising the dairy price support program – an item developed and backed by NMPF. The Senate bill also expands direct payments to dairy producers through the Milk Income Loss Contract program. MILC payments would rise to the original 2002 payment rate of 45 percent, and the volume of milk eligible for payments

would rise from 2.4 million to 4.15 million pounds after FY 2008.

The Senate bill does not contain language applying the dairy checkoff program to imported products, something that NMPF will be urging House and Senate conferees to adopt when they meet next year.

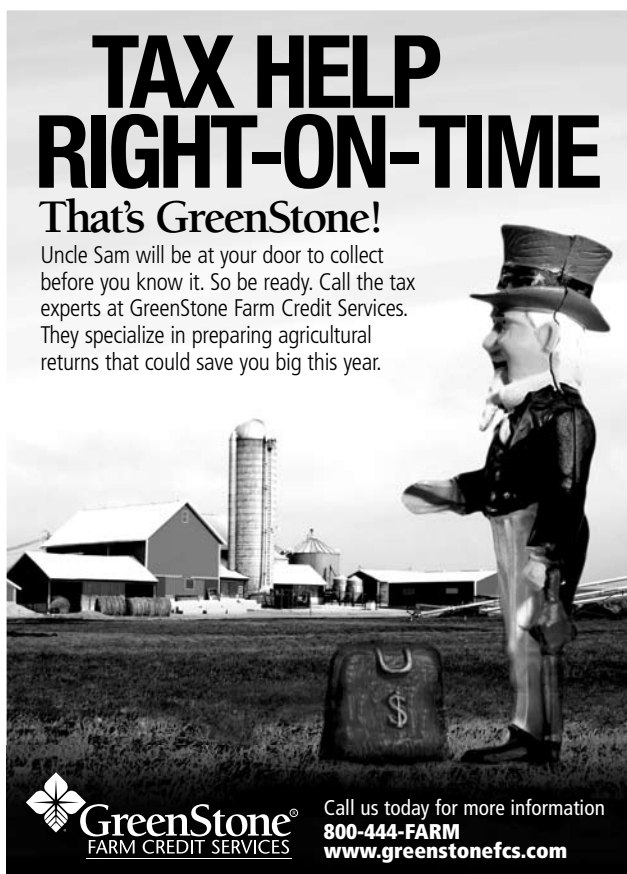
In addition to the dairy items, the Senate Farm Bill also has favorable treatment of renewable energy systems, increased funding for the EQIP program, and more funding for energy programs focused on animal manure management systems.

“Overall, we are positioned very favorably at this point, and we expect that the new Farm Bill will mostly mirror the outline that NMPF first drafted nearly a year ago,” said Kozak. “We appreciate the hard work that members of the Senate put into this package, and we will be working very closely with them, and their House counterparts, as both chambers forge a compromise version in the weeks ahead.”

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Immigration Crackdown Delayed; NMPF Reconvenes Task Force to Address Issue

In November, the Bush administration said that it will modify its planned crackdown on U.S. companies that may be employing illegal immigrants. After it announced this summer that it would begin sending “no match” letters to employers in order to rectify discrepancies in employees’ Social Security numbers, the Administration was sued by a coalition of organizations opposed to the measure. After a judge in California temporarily delayed implementation of the no match rule, the White House has asked the judge to further delay hearing the lawsuit until March 24, or until a new program is ready.

NMPF has again convened its immigration task force to discuss the current situation and develop a plan for additional possible legislative and regulatory activities.