

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **COOPERATIVE NETWORK APPLAUDS LAWMAKERS ON PASSAGE OF 2018 FARM BILL**

MADISON, Wis. [December 20, 2018] – President Donald Trump signed the *Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018*, also known as the Farm Bill, into law today. The legislation, which will authorize the nation's principal farm, rural support, and nutrition assistance programs, received overwhelming support in both bodies of Congress last week, passing by a vote of 369-47 in the House and 87-13 in the Senate.

The bill is expected to cost \$867 billion over a 10-year span, according to Congressional Budget Office estimates. Some of the major provisions included in the 2018 Farm Bill that will affect cooperatives and their member-owners are the following:

- Preserves U.S. investments in domestic co-op development and foreign assistance
- Price Loss Coverage, Agriculture Risk Coverage, Commodity Loans, Dairy Margin Coverage, Livestock Disaster Programs and Crop Insurance are all maintained and strengthened
- Strengthening of the promotion of U.S. agricultural exports and other trade initiatives
- Helps rural communities by improving broadband delivery
- Requires the United States Department of Agriculture to establish regionally located dairy innovation centers to assist dairy farmers with diversifying their products
- Legalizes and provides crop insurance for industrial hemp
- Reforms and reauthorizes farm and nutrition assistance programs for five years
- Re-authorization of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, which will make mental health treatment more available for farmers who suffer from higher rates of depression and suicide

Among the members of the Minnesota delegation who voted in favor of the bill were Senators Amy Klobuchar (DFL) and Tina Smith (DFL), as well as Representatives Tom Emmer (R), Betty McCollum (DFL), Rick Nolan (DFL), and Erik Paulsen (R). Also voting in the affirmative was one of the lead negotiators on the bill, House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Congressman Collin Peterson (DFL – MN). The lone no vote from the delegation was outgoing Congressman Jason Lewis (R). In addition, Congressmen Keith Ellison (DFL) and Tim Walz (DFL) were not present for the vote. Walz is set to assume duties as Minnesota's next governor in 2019, and Ellison will begin his service as Minnesota's next attorney general.

Among the members of the Wisconsin delegation who voted in favor of the bill were Senator Tammy Baldwin (D), as well as Representatives Sean Duffy (R), Glenn Grothman (R), and Mark Pocan (D). Those voting against the bill included Senator Ron Johnson (R), as well as Representatives Mike Gallagher (R), Ron Kind (D), and Jim Sensenbrenner (R). Congresswoman Gwen Moore was not present for the vote. Lastly, Representative Paul Ryan (R), who is also Speaker of the House, did not vote which is the custom of the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

“Cooperative Network congratulates members of both the Minnesota and Wisconsin congressional delegations on passage of the Farm Bill. We appreciate their leadership in helping to shepherd this legislation through the process,” stated Dan Smith, President & CEO of Cooperative Network. “A host of Minnesota and Wisconsin’s cooperatives play an extremely important role in both state’s economies. The Farm Bill contains measures that will continue to bolster the nation’s agricultural sector, as well as assist our co-ops and their member-owners throughout both states.”

*Cooperative Network – the trusted voice for cooperatives – is committed to protecting and promoting Minnesota’s and Wisconsin’s cooperative businesses and their shared cooperative principles by providing advocacy, education, public awareness, and development services to a diverse variety of cooperatives. Visit [cooperativenetwork.coop](http://cooperativenetwork.coop) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [YouTube](#) for more information.*

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