

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1501

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Administrator Zach Ducheneaux
Farm Service Agency
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

January 16, 2024

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Administrator Ducheneaux,

We write today to urge the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) to swiftly open the sign-up period for our producers to enroll in the 2024 Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program.

DMC, first authorized as the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy) in the 2014 Farm Bill and expanded to its current form through the 2018 Farm Bill, is the nation's premiere risk management tool for our dairy producers. The DMC program, which helps producers manage changes between milk prices and feed costs, protects our farmers and their families from the natural uncertainty that comes with working in the dairy industry.

Now, as we are nearly halfway through January, there continues to be no indication given to producers of when they will be eligible to select their DMC coverage level for 2024. This delay in DMC enrollment coupled with the already unpredictable nature of the industry is concerning for the farm economy and the constituents we represent. Transparency and communication are needed from USDA as the enrollment period continues to be delayed.

Throughout 2023 our producers faced numerous challenges – high input costs, continued inflation, and unpredictable weather conditions to name a few – meaning that programs like DMC, which provide certainty during unstable economic conditions, are vital to our producers and rural communities. Last year, margins for our dairy producers were at the smallest they've been since the DMC program began, and DMC was a crucial tool to hedge risk. Our nation and farm economy rely on the hard-working people that dedicate their lives to feeding and fueling the world, and we need to ensure they have the risk management tools they need to succeed.

Therefore, we strongly urge the FSA to move quickly to open the DMC enrollment period for our dairy producers. Certainty and predictability are essential in the agricultural industry, and this delay only causes frustration and economic strain for our producers.

Sincerely,



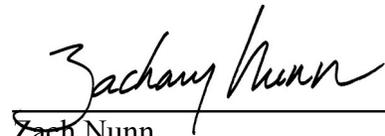
Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



Brad Finstad
Member of Congress



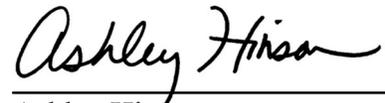
Nicholas A. Langworthy
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Zach Nunn
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Dusty Johnson
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Ashley Hinson
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Mariannette Miller-Meeks,
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