

## RMFU delegates take rural issues to D.C.

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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Delegates representing Rocky Mountain Farmers Union (RMFU) at the National Farmers Union (NFU) annual meeting held recently in Washington, D.C., played a key role in developing the NFU policy for 2009. They also took the concerns of rural Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming to the offices of their congressional representatives.

“Our delegates worked hard to advance the interests of farmers and ranchers in this region,” said Rocky Mountain Farmers Union President Kent Peppler. “They helped shape policy on transmission towers, National Animal Identification, the Conservation Reserve Program, and commodity prices. These programs are key to energy development, conservation, and agricultural profitability.”

“I was pleased that we delegates successfully offered a policy that would see that landowners with transmission towers on their property receive annual payments based on the amount of electricity they carry,” said Roy Pfaltzgraff, a farmer from Haxtun. The transmission policy proposal was unanimously adopted by the NFU convention.

“Farmers and ranchers are facing lower commodity prices while our production expenses remain so high there are very slim profit margins, if any. Rocky offered a policy statement calling for the immediate implementation of the 2008 farm bill to get new programs going. We also urged Tom Vilsack to issue immediate rules for re-enrollment of Conservation Reserve acreage with expiring contracts,” said Dorothy Zavorka, RMFU delegate from Torrington, Wyo.

“During floor debate, we pointed out that the current animal ID program will do nothing to prevent a livestock disease outbreak or to ensure food safety. We called for enhancing coordination between state and federal agencies and for increased funding for disease prevention and testing programs that are already in place,” said Armando Valdez, RMFU delegate from Alamosa.

“The convention took a position opposing mandatory NAIS and urged improved coordination between state and federal agencies on disease prevention and testing programs.”

In addition to Peppler, Pfaltzgraff, Zavorka and Valdez, RMFU delegates included Brian Albers of Louisville, Barbara Marty of Strasburg, Monty Niebur of Akron, Vince and Carol Potestio of Pueblo, John Ellis of Boulder, and Gregg Gossett of Portales, N.M.

After the conclusion of the NFU convention, RMFU delegates spent the following day visiting with members of Congress from Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming.

“Our delegates took our concerns into the offices of our elected representatives. We had a chance to visit directly with members and their aides on the important issues in their community, state and region. It helped our members of Congress put a face on their rural constituency and appreciate how important agriculture is in the Rockies,” Peppler said.

Please call the RMFU state office at 303-752-5800 if you would like to arrange an interview with a delegate from your region.