



National Family Farm Coalition

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Statement of Ben Burkett, NFFC President, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives Director, and Farmer:

As a farmer from Mississippi and the President of the National Family Farm Coalition, I am very apprehensive about the outcomes of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations in Lima, Peru, this month. Our concerns span the impacts on the entire food system but we are focused specifically on the potential of this agreement to decimate our nation's dairy farmers. With just under 50,000 dairy farmers left in the U.S., they deserve to have sensible policies enacted on a domestic level, not to be crushed by unfair trade deals that threaten their ability to recover their costs of production. It makes no sense for our nation's dairy farmers to compete against dairy farmers in New Zealand and Australia, the lowest-cost producers in the world. We are also anxious about the expanded imports of milk substitutes, such as Milk Protein Concentrate (MPC), which could be substituted in many products without being labeled clearly for customers.

The TPP has the potential to expand the rights and protections for investors over those for consumers, farmers and workers. As our nation is debating its next farm bill, we need to make our policy process more open and democratic. Like NAFTA, the only winners from the TPP will be a few multi-national corporations. We need strong enforcement of our nation's anti-trust laws and a move to break up, not consolidate, the world's production of milk and all other foods. This is simply the wrong path to follow when the potential and enthusiasm to reshape and improve our food system is at hand.

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