



For Immediate Release: April 19, 2007

Contact: Liz Friedlander
202-314-3191, lfriedlander@nfudc.org

NFU Testifies in Support of Conservation Programs

WASHINGTON (April 19, 2007) – New England Farmers Union President and Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Executive Director Jeff LaFleur urged members of a House agriculture subcommittee today to fully fund conservation programs and support their inclusion, along with other environmentally-friendly initiatives, in the 2007 Farm Bill.

Testifying before the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy and Research, LaFleur said, “Rewarding family farmers for making good environmental choices should be a top priority in farm policy.”

LaFleur said that the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which is designed to address soil erosion, water quality and wildlife habitat, is one of the most successful conservation programs in our nation’s history. He urged the current 39.2 million acres enrolled in CRP not be reduced.

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), were included in the 2002 Farm Bill, yet have been consistently under funded. The technical assistance producers need to navigate these often-complicated programs is also lacking.

“The 2007 Farm Bill should provide the financial resources necessary to increase technical assistance within conservation districts,” LaFleur said. “Technical and financial assistance should also be provided to improve water quality and implement water conservation programs.”

LaFleur said the 2007 Farm Bill should build upon these existing programs while also investing in new opportunities beneficial to the environment, producers and rural America. A new nationwide, voluntary, incentive-based, buffer strip initiative and the Farmers Union Carbon Credit Program were cited as new programs that could be included in the 2007 bill.

“The new nationwide, voluntary, incentive-based, buffer strip initiative would build upon the proven success of past buffer strip initiatives by rewarding producers for planting no-till perennial vegetation on production lands adjacent to waterways to help clean up our nation’s water resources,” LaFleur said.

The Farmers Union Carbon Credit Program allows agriculture producers and landowners the opportunity to earn income by storing carbon in their soil through no-till crop production, long-term grass seeding practices, native rangeland and forestry. NFU enrolled more than one million acres within the first two months of the program’s launch. More information on the Farmers Union program can be found at www.nfu.org.