Minn. Creates Coalition to Protect Food Industry

A Greater Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS (PRNewswire) — Policies and regulations that support agriculture are paramount to protecting and growing Minnesota's status as a major player in the farm and food production industry. To help ensure its sustainability, a new coalition called A Greater Minnesota (AGM) has been created to inform Minnesotans about the issues surrounding farming and food production and the economic impacts to the state. This new coalition is launching a campaign to raise awareness – specifically among legislative candidates who can adopt and maintain policies that support a thriving food and agricultural sector.

A key component of the campaign is to inform the public about key issues and ask Minnesota voters to encourage legislative candidates to take the 5-Point MN Farm and Food Pledge. The pledge encourages support for all good MN farms (big or small, traditional or organic), environmental stewardship, caring for farm animals, sensible food labeling and food safety. The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council, [1] the Minnesota Pork Producers Association [2], the Minnesota Turkey Growers Association [3], the Chicken and Egg Association of Minnesota [4], the Minnesota Milk Producers Association [5] and various other Minnesota farm and food entities support the AGM coalition.

Minnesota farmers and food producers play an essential role in the state's economy and are largely responsible for the quality food consumed on a daily basis. The market value of food and farm products sold in Minnesota each year is about $21.3 billion, according to the 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture. Additionally, jobs provided by the food and farm industry employ hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans.

"If you live in Minnesota, the agriculture industry benefits you. It puts good food on your table, supports hundreds of thousands of good jobs in both greater Minnesota and the metro, and is a huge contributor to our state economy," said Perry Aasness, executive director of Minnesota Agri-Growth Council. "We need legislators to put good farms, food and jobs first, and we need Minnesota residents to help us hold them accountable to keep our extensive and diverse food and agriculture sector strong."

AGM encourages Minnesota residents to visit www.farmandfoodmn.org [6] to learn more about agriculture and how they have a vested interest in its vitality. The website is also home to a platform that helps people easily discover candidates for office in their district and offers them a simple on-line tool to urge candidates to support the critical farms and food agenda.

Despite its importance, farming advocates are on the decline. The disconnect between farmers/food producers and everyday folks continues to grow. A recent poll found that only 42 percent of people in Minnesota personally know someone who operates or works on a farm. Those numbers are even higher in urban areas

and among the young.

Concerns regarding the safety and methods of how our food is produced have increased dramatically in recent years, but the care, safety and protected environment of our farm animals has never been better. Crops, today, are producing higher yields, nourishing more people, all while using less water, fuel and other chemicals.

"Unfortunately, the reality is that farmers and food-related companies are under pressure from extreme activists and the views of the majority are not being heard," said David Preisler, executive director of the Minnesota Pork Producers Association. "Our state government needs to be a stronger partner and supporter of the farm and food agenda and policy priorities."

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[3] http://cp.mcafee.com/d/1jWVIp41AqdEInvvud7bzP1KVJ6XbVEVpjvohdETpvd7barXPVJ6X8VdVUQsFzzqdS3hOqen6kS3hOraX6nil8v4y2JgcX2uAvlZ2mYKrR0PI9WhZnQ9rOVJAwYqehRCn-LObxEVjd7bDnKnjj7nVdwsCCPORQX8EGT78YG7DR8OJMddICNNK_8I9LfzAm4PhOrKr01GOx3WlDISUBvbsLxJpKxclFYjcHvg5bhxVyxykvVsSYOUedy-Nld46Mgd40LmG1Ew4GWvasGMd40QvVDpOwhd40qGJmcZxcQg214K2_fSvE6y0g8_13jh1a1Ew6VgxZaPQSeodw5tzjvKjY9V9
[4] http://cp.mcafee.com/d/avndy0Q838QrhoK--Yqen7C3tPqdSnPhOOC-MyrhKO-qemkTTDPqdShOrPNEVj76QrI6zAQsKcFI6zASlScKAGg-945qwpS4Z8-HW4JVsTG1DojQzWLEiTBPr91UQszHcLZvAn3hOCqeneLsKCCeLOr0VddDBHFShhlKehVkffGhBrwqrodzzt-hojuv78I9CzATsS02lxoDaNnUs01MSITgCaQ-9ClLE2BEMYNgNafYKrups76NvoGCy3o86y0nHI0Qg2ltfBelo6y0qfYPIVg8Cy0dlmH6uMCq810yn1vDXfQ3h084vwxFEwB0Qg3sEg-BpWr7c6QysgZebkjhIg
[5] http://cp.mcafee.com/d/2DRPoscxNJ5yXXXNEVsuodTdETpvd7barX29J6XbVEVpjvuvdETp79Lf6zBcsrhKMqejhOUOCMqejpnoOWiF3UAglG1DojQzWLEiTBPuE6txfifG-xbundIA7zhOeIO_R-hsd7apEVsWZOWqoW_9I3AQSumKDp55mUV7BgY-F6lK1FJYSedTV5xdVYsyMCqejtPo09m2IzOL00sdHdQ9yJfypBrW0Fqcfckciz_bCTCn1NInSaFEwS21Ew5W

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