

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) said Wednesday that a Vermonter -- Paul C. Bourbeau of Swanton -- has been selected as one of 17 members of the newly established and long awaited U.S. Department of Agriculture Dairy Industry Advisory Committee. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced creation of the panel last August to review the issues of farm milk price volatility, and dairy farmer profitability, and the committee's members were announced Wednesday. The committee will also offer suggestions and ideas on how USDA can best address these issues to meet the dairy industry's needs.

After Vilsack began accepting nominations last August, Leahy nominated Bourbeau, and Congressman Peter Welch (D-Vt.) wrote a letter of support for Bourbeau's nomination. Paul and Bonnie Bourbeau have a farm in Swanton, and Paul Bourbeau has been a longtime dairy leader in Vermont and has been actively engaged in local and national dairy policy for the past 25 years through his work as a member of the St. Albans Cooperative Creamery and the National Milk Producers Federation.

Leahy, the most senior member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, said, "The dairy crisis has starkly illuminated the need for both short term and long term remedies to relieve farmers from the rollercoaster market cycles that continue to drive solid dairy farm operations out of business. Vermont will have a thoughtful and experienced voice on the panel at this crucial juncture for the dairy industry. Paul's experience with his own working farm and his involvement in his local community will be clear assets to the Advisory Committee and to USDA."

Welch said, "Paul Bourbeau has been an active and articulate advocate for Vermont's dairy community for decades. Paul has real expertise for the economics of the dairy industry, but he also has