

Also announces legislation to close a trade loophole that drives down milk prices □ □ □ □

At a St. Albans dairy roundtable on Wednesday, Rep. Peter Welch met with Vermont dairy farmers to learn their priorities as the House Agriculture Committee takes up legislation that will set that nation's dairy policy for years to come.

Welch – a member of the House Agriculture Committee – convened the roundtable to hear from Vermont dairy farmers after the Committee's top Democrat, Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), released a draft dairy reform proposal. The proposal includes a strong growth management concept, an idea developed by Vermont dairy farmers that will prevent the price swings that led to the 2009 dairy crisis. Last year, at the request of Vermont dairy farmers, Welch introduced growth management legislation.

"Vermont dairy farmers have been rolling with the tough punches of price instability for too long," Welch said. "I applaud them for leading a national conversation among dairy farmers on the best approach to stabilizing prices. The time to enact common sense reforms is now before the industry experiences another downturn. I intend to bring the good ideas of Vermont's farmers to the table in Congress."

At the roundtable, Welch also announced legislation to close a trade loophole which drives down the price paid to Vermont dairy farmers for their milk. The loophole allows for the unlimited importation of milk protein concentrate (MPC), a form of dried milk product. Welch's bill, the Milk Import Tariff Equity Act (H.R. 2813), will update existing trade regulations to include MPC and treat it like all other imported dairy products. In the past decade, MPC imports have dramatically increased, undermining the market for domestic powdered milk and driving down the price dairy farmers are paid for their milk.

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) has introduced companion legislation in the Senate.

In St. Albans, Welch hears from Vermont dairy farmers about need for price stability

Wednesday, 10 August 2011 12:14
