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March 24, 2026

Chair Aric Putnam
Senate Agriculture and Rural Development Committee
95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: MFU Support for Agrivoltaics, Veterinary Technician, Labeling Provisions in Agriculture Policy Omnibus (SF4561)

Dear Chair Putnam and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to share our support for provisions included in your 2026 Agriculture Policy Omnibus. Thank you for your work to compile this package and I hope it earns the committee's full support.

- **Agrivoltaics (1.7)**– First, we support the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's work to create a statutory definition of 'agrivoltaics.' We believe that production agriculture—like managed grazing—collocated with solar presents a significant opportunity and that clear definition will help ensure that this this new industry works for our members.

As demand for energy grows, we support policies that help farmers and other rural Minnesotans share the wealth created through clean energy generation, contributing to a more sustainable and distributed grid and economy. This means defending and promoting policies that promote more distributed, edge-of-field, and farmer-owned renewable energy projects. It also means thinking about how agriculture and solar can coexist and even thrive together.

The University of Minnesota has long led in demonstrating how to graze livestock and even plant crops between solar panels. And today, we have members who are building their enterprises based on this model. We appreciate MDA's work to provide a clear definition and believe this will help this emerging industry continue to develop in a way that benefits farmers.

- **Veterinary Technician Clarifications (12.24)** – second, the shortage of large animal veterinarians in rural Minnesota is a top concern for our family farmer members and we are hopeful that Minnesota's work to establish a licensed veterinary technician scope of practice will help alleviate the challenge that creates for independent producers.

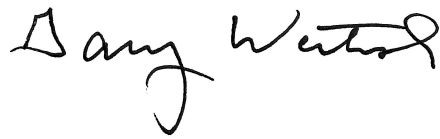
Particularly in the face of damaging new animal diseases, now is the time to ensure that farmers, county fairs, livestock auctions, and others have the professional help they need to ensure the health of livestock. Helping more veterinary professionals practice in rural Minnesota will benefit farmers, animal health, and rural communities.

- **Cell-Cultured Meat Labelling (11.3)** – we support this committee’s work to require accurate labeling of cell-cultured meat. Our members take great pride in their work to raise livestock and take great effort in being transparent and accountable to the consumers they serve. We believe that clear, informative labeling will help consumers make informed decisions and ensure a level playing field.

We also believe strongly that livestock bring important benefits to our communities and economies. Consumers should have the right to choose to support the work of Minnesota farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for your consideration of our support for these provisions and for your work to assemble this omnibus policy bill. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for considering the needs and perspectives of Minnesota’s farm families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "G".

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union