



# Nebraska Farmers Union

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## **Nebraska Farmers Union Commemorates America's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

As the United States marks its 250th anniversary this Independence Day, Nebraska Farmers Union (NeFU) takes this opportunity to celebrate the value of family farm agriculture to our society as a whole, and our shared history. For 250 years, the experiences and lives of family farmers and ranchers have been woven into the fabric of our nation. Family farmers not only helped write the Declaration of Independence, frame our Constitution, and feed our hungry and poor Revolutionary Army, they also helped successfully fight the Revolutionary War.

They did all this knowing that if they failed, they likely would have been hung. Thomas Jefferson believed that family farmers are critical long-term stakeholders of our nation and democracy. Family farmers not only represent an important component of our diverse nation, they fought for and helped create our nation. Family farmers' neighbor friendly values help make our nation the good nation it is.

NeFU also reminds us that the building and successful operation of grassroots organizations like Farmers Union and our American democracy are interlinked in many ways. Both depend on:

- Education starting with ourselves first, then neighbors, public officials, and the general public.
- Cooperation. Harnessing the power of organization and learning how to effectively work with others are keys to success.
- Legislation. Both good public policy and cooperatives depend on a fair and level playing field. Both are made better when the public as a whole is the focus rather than using the process to acquire special advantage for individuals or special interests.
- Think and act like an owner. Participate as an owner rather than a passive watcher. Owners take action to leave things better than when they found them, and they want a better future for generations to come. Thinking about it is not the same as doing it. Cooperatives and democracies both die from apathy and lack of participation.
- Take off your "Me" cap. Put on your "We" cap. Put the overall interests of everyone in the first position. It seldom good policy to want something for yourself that you don't also want for others.
- Civility. Civility requires us to know and do the right thing, even we are mad and might want to do the opposite. Be a person of good will. Practice transparency, patience, tolerance, and inclusion. Be a builder. The Golden Rule works. Treat others as you would want to be treated.
- Ask good, thoughtful, respectful questions. Be a good listener.
- If you want good citizens, partners, neighbors, friends, public officials, or coop members, be one.

NeFU President said, "Now that we have reminded ourselves on how to build, operate, and grow our democracy, our cooperatives, and our grassroots organizations, let's roll up our sleeves and go build something future generations will thank us for."