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**National Young Farmers Coalition to testify before new
Colorado Young and Beginning Farmer Interim Study Committee**
*Will advocate for stronger state policies supporting young farmers,
especially regarding land succession and farmland conservation*

DURANGO, CO (August 7, 2017) – The [National Young Farmers Coalition](http://www.youngfarmers.org) (NYFC), the only national advocacy organization focused solely on the needs of young and beginning farmers and ranchers, which has four chapters in Colorado, will testify before the first-ever Colorado Young and Beginning Farmer Interim Study Committee on **Thursday, August 10, 9 a.m., Room 357, State Capitol Building, 200 East Colfax Avenue, Denver.**

The committee was approved by the General Assembly in May upon a request submitted by state Senator Kerry Donovan. The committee will study how state policy can better assist beginning farmers and ranchers, while also helping to protect working landscapes, enhance climate resiliency, promote innovation, and sustain rural communities and economies.

“This is a great opportunity for the Interim Committee to step up on behalf of young farmers and ranchers in Colorado and guide the General Assembly to smart policy solutions,” said Kate Greenberg, NYFC Western Program Director. “With two-thirds of Colorado’s farmland ready to transition, we need more young people who are willing to work the land, steward natural resources, and feed our communities.”

Greenberg noted that the challenges facing young farmers today are unlike those met by previous generations. Barriers like lack of access to affordable land, student loan debt, and an increasingly unpredictable climate now stand in the way of young people who have the drive, skill, and passion to farm. (Read more at www.youngfarmers.org.)

“We need more young farmers, plain and simple,” said farmer Chad Franke, who operates Franke Farms, a hog operation in Roggen, CO. “As a young farmer, a member of the National Young Farmers Coalition, vice president of the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, and treasurer of

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the Colorado Pork Producers Council, I understand how important it is for policy makers to advocate on behalf of family farmers, both multigenerational farmers like me, and those farmers starting from scratch.”

Franke added, “With my own kids starting to join me on the farm, I hope the Interim Committee recognizes the importance of the next generation of farmers and ranchers to our rural communities and way of life, and the difficulty young and beginning farmers face.”

NYFC is working with key partners on this effort, including the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Colorado Farm Bureau, Colorado Cattlemen’s Association, Colorado State University Extension, Colorado Young Farmers Education Association, and Guidestone Colorado and Colorado Land Link.

The six members of the committee are Sens. Jerry Sonnenberg (Chair), Kerry Donovan, and Larry Crowder, and Reps. Barbara McLachlan (Vice Chair), Marc Catlin, and Dominique Jackson.

The second and final Interim Committee meeting will be held at the state Capitol on Friday, October 6, 2017. The committee will be able to recommend two pieces of legislation to the General Assembly.

Greenberg noted that constituents who are unable to attend either committee hearing are encouraged to write committee members in support of this effort, attend future hearings, and get involved with a local NYFC chapter.

NYFC has built a grassroots base of over 120,000 supporters and launched 36 farmer-led chapters in 26 states, including four affiliate chapters in Colorado. The only national group focused solely on young farmers, NYFC helps young farmers become leaders in their communities, and ensures young farmers a seat at the table within all levels of government.

The National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) is an advocacy network of farmers fighting for the future of agriculture. Visit NYFC on the web at www.youngfarmers.org, and on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).

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