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July 24, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Farmers' Health Cooperative of Wisconsin exceeding projections

More than 1,000 members, \$2.5 million in premiums for new health care cooperative since April 1

MADISON, Wis. (July 24, 2007) – Founders of the Farmers Health Cooperative of Wisconsin (FHCW) report that the new co-op is providing the state's farmers and agri-businesses with affordable, quality health insurance at a faster rate than was originally projected. When FHCW was created, the Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives' (WFC) goal was to serve at least 1,000 farmers after one operating year. The new cooperative has surpassed that goal in less than three months.

"We have easily surpassed the 1,000-member mark after only a few months of our April 1, 2007, unveiling. Originally the goal was to be at our current point in April 2008," said Bill Oemichen, WFC president and CEO. "The fact the Farmers' Health Cooperative of Wisconsin is growing this rapidly is a testament to the need for this program benefiting Wisconsin's farmers."

The need for FHCW is also illustrated by the fact that 12 percent of current FHCW members were previously uninsured. "The high number of FHCW members who were previously uninsured is a good indicator of the value offered through FHCW health insurance plans," said Oemichen.

Oemichen said that the cooperative has surpassed \$2.5 million in premiums and boasts members in 57 of Wisconsin's 72 counties. As another indicator of the co-op's strength, Oemichen pointed out that FHCW enrollment spans all age groups, all risk categories and includes individuals and families alike, with two-person and family contracts representing more than 65 percent of the enrollment to date.

The rapid growth of the cooperative is also due in part to a series of town hall meetings that were held throughout the state this spring. At the meetings, WFC and its partner Agri-Services Agency presented information on the new cooperative and the six benefit plans available to members. Meetings have been scaled back during the summer months to accommodate farm field work schedules, but are scheduled to resume again this fall to coincide with available times for farmers. Oemichen also credited WFC's member-cooperatives throughout the state for their continued support of FHCW. Cooperatives contributed through communicating with their members, hosting meetings, and conducting research for FHCW.

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Wisconsin farmers and agri-businesses do not need to wait until the town hall meetings resume in the fall to receive more information about FHCW. They can contact the Farmers Health Cooperative of Wisconsin now for more information by calling (800) 539-9370 or visiting www.farmershealthcooperative.com.

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