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Rep. Peterson Heads U.S. Ag Committee

Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson sees his new job as chairman of the House Agriculture Committee as providing challenges and opportunities.

His challenges will come in hammering out a new Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) in the 2007 Farm Bill and in standardizing the National Livestock Identification Program.

When the Democrats took over the House of Representatives, Rep. Peterson was elevated to the chairmanship after serving on the committee for 16 years.

"There aren't going to be too many changes in the current Farm Bill outside of some minor tinkering with loan rates and target prices. I'd like to see a permanent disaster program and some money spent on conservation," said Peterson in a telephone interview from Washington.

Peterson has been a long-time supporter of the National Livestock Identification Program but he now believes the program is "screwed up."

"I met with the Secretary of Agriculture after the election and I told him I felt they have made a mess out of the program. There isn't a standard for the system to work under. They have spent \$100 million setting up a program with all these different data bases without any standardization and I don't know how they are going to pull it together," he said.

He added he didn't have a problem with the private industry coming up with a system. Yet, he strongly believes the government needs to set the rules and require standardization.

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