



## **Statement from FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Board of Directors**

As many of you know, several dairy farmers were given notice that they no longer would have a market for their milk with Grassland beginning on May 1<sup>st</sup>. At a time when volumes are high and markets are stressed, this notification couldn't have come at a more difficult moment.

FarmFirst representatives were in Washington, D.C. meeting with Congressional leaders, right as these farmers were opening their letter. FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, along with other members of the Midwest Dairy Coalition, were able to inform these congressional leaders about this latest development that Midwest dairy farmers were facing. They were able to illustrate the importance once more of how vital trade agreements are to the dairy industry, and more importantly, to dairy farmers.

FarmFirst staff have worked extensively on this issue, connecting with area processors, affected farmers and State Agriculture Department officials to discuss possible solutions for these Wisconsin and Minnesota dairy farmers. If you are a dairy farmer and you have not yet contacted the Wisconsin Farm Center at DATCP, please do so by calling 1-800-942-2474.

While we continue to work for immediate solutions for these dairy farmers, we are also looking into the long-term future as it relates to promising international trade and increasing domestic consumption, in addition to monitoring the impact this can have on the Midwest marketplace. It is also critical to ensure your Congressional leaders understand the value that dairy product sales – both domestic and international – provide to you and your farm.

The industry is made up of diverse and resilient dairy farm families and processors, and we all need each other. This industry we love needs to come together, work together and support one another. It is during these challenging times that we must find solutions for the long-term viability of all involved, which means we must all do our part. We will continue to work hard for all our partners in the dairy industry to improve domestic consumption and international trade, both of which will allow our market to grow and be profitable.

Sincerely,

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Board of Directors