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FarmFirst Applauds Roberts-Stabenow Commitment to Food Biotech Legislation

Madison, Wis. [June 23, 2016]—FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is pleased to see a compromise agreement reached on the federal biotech food labeling legislation, thanks to Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow.

Together, Roberts and Stabenow have reached an agreement that provides clear federal preemption, which will prevent states and municipalities from creating further havoc with food labeling laws on food biotechnology. Furthermore, there is also a clear exemption for animal feed, ensuring that consumption of animal feed that was produced using biotechnology does not subject the meat and milk from the animals to be labeled as biotech foods.

“A patchwork of state labeling requirements would only create mass confusion among consumers and only continue to raise costs across the food chain, beginning with the producers through the processors,” says David Cooper, General Manager at FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. “Our efforts truly paid off over the past few months as this new legislation provides strong parameters to food labels while also building a foundation of sound science behind this policy.”

As the Vermont labeling bill is set to take hold on July 1, this new biotech food labeling legislation will allow a consistent policy to be set across the U.S. FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative has worked with other dairy organizations on this legislation, advocating that there needs to be a national approach when it comes to sharing additional information on food labels.

“The value of this congressional action is to make it a standardized approach to labeling and communication with consumers. If it is about information and consumer choice, this will establish the opportunity to have consistent messaging,” says Cooper.

However, there is work yet to be done. While Vermont’s GMO labeling bill goes into effect on July 1, the Senate still needs to pass this new agreement, and then it will need to be passed by the House of Representatives before going to the President.

“Our concerns were heard, and legislators Roberts and Stabenow acted upon it,” says Cooper. “Now, it is critical to get this bill to the finish line in the coming weeks. During that time, we will work to ensure Congressional leaders understand how important this bill is to the industry.”

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is based in Madison, Wis. and represents farms in Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana through policy bargaining, dairy marketing services, laboratory testing opportunities and industry promotion.

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