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FarmFirst Applauds Appropriations Bill Show of Support for Dairy

Madison, Wis. [December 20, 2019] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative applauds the House and Senate for passing a final Fiscal Year 2020 appropriation bill package that shows support for dairy farmers entering the new year.

First and foremost, FarmFirst is greatly encouraged by the language Congress included urging the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to enforce their standards of identity for dairy.

Both the House and Senate versions of the Agriculture-FDA bill included report language reaffirming bipartisan congressional concern with mislabeled imitation dairy products and directing FDA to enforce its own rules on labeling. The House and Senate passed the final compromise funding bill this week.

“Plant-based products using dairy terms on their labels are simply misleading consumers to believe these products are nutritionally equivalent, and that is simply not the case,” says Jeff Lyon, general manager for FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative.

“The House and Senate have shown strong bipartisan support for the FDA to address this mislabeling issue that has gone on for far too long. In addition, the recent confirmation of Dr. Stephen Hahn as FDA Commissioner gives us optimism that the FDA will finally address this,” says Lyon. “The message couldn’t be any clearer to the FDA – now is the time to enforce their standards of identity for dairy.”

Additionally, FarmFirst is very pleased to see funding for the Dairy Business Innovation program, assisting in the dairy industry to explore opportunities for innovation and modernization.

“As an industry, U.S. dairy has always been innovating and developing new ideas. This funding helps spur further innovation and product diversification, bringing to life some of those ideas and initiatives years ahead of when they otherwise would have become available,” says Lyon. “Ultimately, these initiatives will provide greater value for the all-so-important product that dairy farmers produce: milk.”

“We would be remiss to not thank our congressional leaders for their work on garnering support for the additional funding for these Dairy Business Innovation initiatives, representing more than \$20 million in grant money. We are excited to see where researchers, businesses, processing plants and cheesemakers – the industry as a whole – will lead the industry with this opportunity for development and innovation,” says Lyon.

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, established in 2013 and based in Madison, Wis., represents farmers in Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana by providing legislative and regulatory advocacy, dairy marketing services, disaster protection, laboratory testing opportunities and industry promotion. FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is a merger of three long-time prominent Wisconsin-based cooperatives. Learn more about FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative by visiting: www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com.

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