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Contact: Julie Sweney, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative  
608-286-1909 or [jsweney@farmfirstcoop.com](mailto:jsweney@farmfirstcoop.com)



## **FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Applauds Dairy Innovation Program**

*Madison, Wis.* [August 1, 2018] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative applauds the U.S. Senate’s passage of the \$7 million in funding for the Dairy Innovation Act. Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin introduced the legislation in June as a way to support dairy product innovation, develop new products and expand markets.

Building off the success of the Dairy Business Innovation Center, this legislation will spur innovation in dairy businesses and foster the development of new and innovative dairy products. Additionally, existing dairy plants could be modernized and create greater efficiencies while supporting new dairy entrepreneurs.

“Cheesemakers and dairy product manufacturers are incredibly talented in making high-quality dairy products that consumers have come to love,” says Jeff Lyon, General Manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. “When faced with challenges, it is important to think outside the box. This legislation allows the dairy industry to do just that – by being creative in the development of new dairy products, expanding production capacity and developing new markets. We believe these are key steps that will help support the milk price in the near future, as well as the long term.”

This legislation comes at a time when the dairy community could use some positive news, while farmers continue to face depressed milk prices.

“FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is elated that this legislation was passed overwhelmingly, demonstrating great support for the viability of the dairy industry. I’d like to thank Senator Baldwin for introducing this bill and shepherding it through the legislative process,” says Lyon. The legislation passed earlier today by a vote of 83 to 15.

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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 cooperatives.