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## **FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Applauds Farm Bill Progress; Asks Congress to Pass the Bill Quickly**

*Madison, Wis.* [December 11, 2018] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative applauds the work of the Congressional leaders as the final conference report for the 2018 Farm Bill has been released.

“The timely release of the Farm Bill shows that leadership in Washington D.C. heard the concerns of the people this legislation affects –those that farm, but also those citizens that utilize government assistance to provide food for their table. Specifically, for dairy, valuable reforms were made to the dairy title, making the risk management program much more useful to dairy farmers and their management plans,” says John Rettler, president of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative.

Previously known as the Margin Protection Program (MPP), the new risk management program is known as the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and provides greater flexibility in coverage options.

“Dairy farmers are smart about managing their costs and increasing their bottom line, but risk management options are not a one-size-fits-all. This new program addressed changes in the feed-cost formula and allows greater flexibility, allowing farmers of various sizes to participate in Tier 1 premium rates, as well as allowing simultaneous participation in this new program and the Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) insurance program,” says Rettler.

Additionally, the dairy title also includes important provisions beyond these key reforms to dairy risk management.

“The 2018 Farm Bill continues to provide funding for trade promotion, which has proven to be effective in establishing export markets,” says Jeff Lyon, general manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. “Land and water conservation programs are also a mainstay in the 2018 Farm Bill, supporting dairy farmers and their efforts in maintaining healthy and safe natural resources so they can continue to support the future of their farms.”

The release of this important piece of legislation is an accomplishment for both parties in the House and the Senate; however, a few additional steps remain before becoming law.

“We thank Senator Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS), Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway (R-TX) and Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN) for their continued efforts on the much-needed reforms to the Farm Bill and ensuring that Midwest dairy farmers concerns were addressed in these changes,” says Lyon. “We look

forward to a timely passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, encouraging all Midwest representatives within the House and Senate to support its passage, and then for President Trump’s signature into law.”

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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.

View the Full Press Release online, [here](#). Access cooperative logos and photos, [here](#).