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FarmFirst Applauds USDA's Pledge for \$317 Million in Dairy Product Purchases

Madison, Wis. [May 8, 2020] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative approves of the latest pledge from USDA to buy \$317 million in dairy products as part of its Farmers to Families Food Box Program.

“Dairy farmers are looking for real marketplace solutions to ensure that dairy products continue to get to those who need them, and this program helps accomplish that,” says John Rettler, dairy farmer from Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. “We are grateful for the USDA and Secretary Perdue on their swift effort on getting this in motion. Time is of the essence as dairy farmers contemplate how they can keep their operations going, knowing that their milkchecks are falling far short of the bills they have to pay.”

“The need for healthy, wholesome food products is astronomical right now. We applaud the work of USDA for this new Farmers to Families Food Box Program, helping get high quality dairy foods to those that need it most,” says Jeff Lyon, FarmFirst general manager. “This is a great start on ensuring dairy will get to those that need it most. FarmFirst will continue to monitor the need for additional funding and will continue to advocate for as much funding being dedicated to actual product purchases and less on distribution expenses. The more that can be spent on actual dairy products, the more that dairy farmers will benefit.”

These dairy product purchases are part of \$1.2 billion in contracts that was made possible through the CARES Act, where Congress approved funding to support American producers and communities in need. This announcement comes on the heels of the USDA approving additional funding through Section 32, adding \$140 million to this total of dairy product purchases.

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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