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FarmFirst Applauds USMCA Passage

Madison, Wis. [January 16, 2020] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative applauds today's landslide passage of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) trade agreement with the ending vote of 89 to 10.

"Today's resulting vote in the Senate showcases a strong bipartisan support for this modern trade agreement and ultimately strong support to get U.S. dairy products to be exported to our neighbors to the north and south," says John Rettler, dairy farmer from Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. "Getting to this point with USMCA has been no small feat. We extend our appreciation to our U.S. Trade Ambassadors and congressional leaders who have made this a priority. Our members are looking forward to the benefits that will be reaped once the trade agreement is fully implemented."

"This new trade agreement addresses the class 6 and 7 pricing distortion issues and expands market access for U.S. dairy into Canada while also affirming our strong trade relationship with Mexico. Mexico is our top dairy export country, and this trade agreement allows for that relationship to continue to flourish," says Jeff Lyon, general manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. "In addition to reforming Canada's controversial dairy pricing system, the USMCA also establishes new protections for products that rely on common cheese names, such as parmesan and feta."

"There is still work to be done. We are grateful for the hard-fought details that are part of this agreement, however, we would be remiss to not monitor implementation of this agreement to ensure it is being enforced in full and that U.S. dairy is reaping the full benefits," says Lyon.

U.S. dairy exports are projected to increase by more than \$314 million a year, according to the International Trade Commission.

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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