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FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Supports Dairy Pride Act Reintroduction, Urges Immediate Action on Dairy Imitators

Madison, Wis. [March 15, 2019] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative fully supports the reintroduction of the Dairy Pride Act, by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Jim Risch (R-ID.) The Dairy Pride Act prohibits non-dairy products from using dairy terms on their labeling and forces the agency to resolve the issue within 90 days of its passage.

“FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative has been engaged on this issue for years. Now is the time for clarity to be brought to the dairy case. Consumers want transparency in the food and the products they buy more than ever before. We commend Senator Baldwin for her efforts to hold the FDA accountable. Clear and accurate food labels is something that consumers deserve, as well as dairy farmers receiving recognition for their hard work and dedication in producing such a wholesome, quality product,” says Jeff Lyon, General Manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, Madison, WI.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) comment period on dairy labeling expired at the end of January. However, with Commissioner Scott Gottlieb recently announcing his resignation, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is concerned that his departure will slow down FDA efforts to enforce dairy labeling standards.

“Consumers deserve to be treated with respect and that begins with proper and accurate food labels. Milk is clearly defined by the FDA, and this definition should be enforced,” says John Rettler, President of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. “It’s about time the FDA made it a priority to uphold its responsibility of enforcing existing labeling requirements, especially when it comes to dairy.”

The bipartisan legislation is cosponsored by Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Angus King (I-ME), and it has also been introduced in the House by Representatives Peter Welch (D-VT) and Mike Simpson (R-ID). In a letter to Gottlieb, Senators urged Gottlieb to “move forward and expeditiously enforce against imitation products that use dairy’s good name for their own benefit, in violation of the FDA’s existing Standards of Identity.”

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative was established in 2013 and is based in Madison, Wis. The cooperative represents farms in Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana through policy bargaining, dairy marketing services, laboratory testing opportunities and industry promotion.

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