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Hardtke Retires, Homb Joins as Family Dairies USA Director of Milk Marketing

Madison, Wis. [April 23, 2019] – Norbert Hardtke, Director of Milk Marketing for the Family Dairies USA division of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, will retire on April 30, 2019, after a career dedicated to serving the milk marketing needs of dairy farmers across the Midwest. As he prepares for retirement, Mick Homb is set to take the reins as the new director of milk marketing for the cooperative’s Family Dairies USA division.

Norbert first joined Family Dairies USA back in 2002 as the director of milk sales. Prior to that, he worked at the National Farmers Organization for 30 years, managing their reload facilities and overseeing field work, milk hauling and transport dispatch before becoming Midwest regional manager. In his spare time, Norbert is a volunteer fireman in his local community of Sauk City. He is married to his wife, Christine, for 41 years, and has two children, Kimberly and Kevin, and one grandpuppy, Molly.

Through the years, Norbert has seen the milk marketing division evolve and grow.

“I have enjoyed seeing the successes of the milk marketing program, and being able to generate income and opportunity for additional dairy producers to join the program. It means a lot to me to know that several of our producers have been with Family Dairies USA a long time, including several of our milk buyers as well. I believe that means we’re doing something right,” says Norbert.

Norbert looks forward to spending more time on his hobbies in his retirement, including time spent fishing. He may spend less time marketing milk, but he plans to spend plenty of time enjoying his favorite – frozen custard – whenever he can.

Changing of the Guard

Taking on a milk marketing role that includes managing a diverse milk hauling schedule, a variety of buyers with seasonal fluctuations and overseeing milk producer payroll, milk haulers and federal regulations is no walk in the park. However, Mick Homb is up to the task.

Mick brings his experience working as a production manager at Dean Foods to his new role, where he oversaw scheduling for an entire processing plant, including fluid milk bottling, cheesemaking, and sour cream production. In his prior role, he also was able to provide efficiencies in schedules, managing payroll for this employees and handle labor negotiations. He is eager to embrace the adventure and challenges that await him in this new chapter.

The thing he is excited about the most? The people he gets to work with.

“Throughout the course of my career, I have come to appreciate working with those that are dedicated to their work. That they are passionate and willing to do what it takes to get the job done right. Not only that but the desire to work as a team – dairy farmers, milk haulers, intake workers – we are all working together towards a common goal. And that means a lot to me,” says Mick.

Mick was born and raised in Darlington, Wis., and after living in southern Illinois for several years working for Dean Foods, he is eager to return to his Wisconsin roots.

“We are grateful for Norbert’s years of service and dedication to Family Dairies USA, helping establish and build the cooperative’s marketing program to what it is today,” says Jeff Lyon, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative General Manager. “As we wish Norbert a happy retirement, we are also welcoming Mick to the cooperative family. We are confident that Mick’s experience in the processing side of the dairy industry will serve him and our patrons well as Family Dairies USA moves forward under his leadership. His team player attitude and warm personality make him a great fit to lead the milk marketing division.”

Please join FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative in congratulating Norbert Hardtke on his retirement and welcoming Mick Homb to his new role.

Family Dairies USA, the milk marketing division of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, has patrons in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and markets their milk to several dairy processors who manufacture fluid, cheese and spoonable products in addition to dairy ingredients. Family Dairies USA also has an intake reload facility in Kewaskum, Wis.

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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