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FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Endorses Feed Emergency Enhancement During Disasters Act (FEEDD Act)

Madison, Wis. [June 10, 2019] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative endorses the newly-introduced Feed Emergency Enhancement During Disasters Act known as the FEEDD Act. Cosponsored by Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN) and Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-SD), the FEEDD Act will give farmers and ranchers additional emergency flexibility to help alleviate feed concerns as well as promote conservation in years of excessive moisture, flooding and drought.

“After the spring season we’ve just experienced, this legislation is welcome to allow farmers the chance to make the most of what they can of this growing season. Feed inventories were greatly diminished with the excessive flooding earlier this spring. Whatever inventories dairy and beef farmers had built up over the past few years became pretty valuable after the weather we had late last year. The slow and incredibly wet start to this planting and growing season didn’t help matters either,” says John Rettler, dairy farmer from Neosho, Wis. and President of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative.

Under the Federal Crop Insurance Program, producers that are unable to plant a crop due to adverse conditions are eligible to receive a small indemnity (55% of their guarantee) but are prohibited from growing a cash commodity due to a missed window in the growing season. They can plant the ground to cover but there is a prohibition on haying and grazing before November 1st. Producers can elect to hay or graze the cover but must take another discount on their indemnity (35% of their guarantee) although the forage value is far less than a commodity crop.

“Personally, I was fortunate to have a local distiller’s grains available for a few days where our inventory was running low before we could get more hay chopped from the field. I know many other farmers were getting concerned too. This year is important to build up some of that feed inventory again, not knowing what the future holds,” says Rettler. “Additionally, using cover crops and hay and grazing methods will help prevent soil erosion during flood conditions, protecting from excessive nutrients entering main waterways and improving overall soil health in our croplands.”

“Essentially, this legislation is a win-win for everyone, and needed at a time like now,” adds Rettler.

The FEEDD Act would create an emergency waiver authority for the Secretary of Agriculture to allow for haying, grazing or chopping of a cover crop before November 1st in the event of a feed shortage due to

excessive moisture, flood or drought without producers taking a further discount on their crop insurance. Additionally, this legislation will provide emergency forage for personal use or donation for family farmers and ranchers when devastating weather hits, and enhance the overall farm safety net for diversified crop and livestock producers.

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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