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## FarmFirst Applauds USMCA Progress, Seeks Swift Passage of Trade Deal

*Madison, Wis.* [December 10, 2019] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative applauds the agreement reached on the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) by U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. FarmFirst urges lawmakers to work diligently on legislation that will lead to its passage yet this year.

“The agriculture industry has been eagerly awaiting the passage of the USMCA, especially dairy,” says John Rettler, dairy farmer from Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst. “This new trade agreement addresses Canada’s Class 7 pricing issue as well as expanding market access for U.S. dairy.”

According to Purdue University research economist, Maksy Chepeliev, U.S. dairy exports could increase by over \$280 million or approximately 5% of total U.S. exports under the USMCA.

“The agreement sends a positive message to the rest of the world by demonstrating that the U.S. can sign and pass a trade agreement that reflects modern trade rules,” says Jeff Lyon, FarmFirst General Manager.

Negotiations between lawmakers and the White House resulted in an enhanced Dispute Settlement process for enforcing the agreement’s measures. Benefits from the USMCA will be more easily realized by having this enforcement mechanism available, especially to the dairy industry.

“While there are benefits between the U.S. and Canada in this agreement, its passage will provide security with our long-time trading partner, Mexico. This agreement supports common cheese names, maintaining the use of generic terms such as parmesan and feta,” says Lyon. “Hopefully the House and the Senate will pass the USMCA before Christmas. For dairy farmers, that would be the best gift going into 2020.”

*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](http://www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com).*

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