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Contact: Julie Sweney, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative  
608-286-1909 or [jsweney@farmfirstcoop.com](mailto:jsweney@farmfirstcoop.com)



## **FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Discusses Trade with Vice President Mike Pence**

*Madison, Wis.* [May 16, 2019] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative participated in a roundtable discussion with Vice President Mike Pence during his visit at J&D Manufacturing in Eau Claire, Wis. on May 16. With a focus on trade, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative board member and dairy farmer Wayne Gajewski, Athens, Wis. expressed the need to pass the U.S. Mexico Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA) during this discussion.

“Trade agreements have proven to be very important for U.S. dairy, which is why it is imperative to pass the USMCA,” says Wayne Gajewski, FarmFirst board member and dairy farmer from Athens, Wis. “Every day that passes without ratifying USMCA is another day that the U.S. dairy industry risks losing valuable marketshare.”

Discussions focused on the value that trade agreements like USMCA had on industries including dairy, soybeans and manufacturing, to name a few. Vice President Mike Pence highlighted several of the positive changes made to the USMCA, including greater access to Canada and continuing a great trading relationship with Mexico.

“Trade is an important piece of the puzzle when it comes to U.S. milk prices, and the strong trade relationships that have been built over time are hanging in the balance as the USMCA waits to be passed by Congress. We appreciate Vice President Mike Pence for his words today focused on the value that USMCA provides to U.S. dairy, and look forward to its swift passage soon,” says Jeff Lyon, General Manager for FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. “It is also important that the retaliatory tariffs are lifted to restore trade relations and continue to work towards free and fair trade.”

The USMCA was originally signed by President Trump back on November 30, 2018. FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative supports the USMCA as it should yield benefits to U.S. dairy producers if fully enacted.

“It is important to all members of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative that our concerns are heard,” says Gajewski. “We look forward to the passage of the USMCA and for the tariffs to be lifted – and hopefully soon on both accounts.”

In addition to Wayne Gajewski, nine other FarmFirst members were in attendance showing support of passing USMCA including board members Brian Wozniak of Stanley, Wis., Jean Reisinger of Spring Green, Wis., and Rich Meyer of Unity, 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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