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Statement on Ag Assistance to Offset Damage from Retaliatory Tariffs

From Jeff Lyon, General Manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative:

Madison, Wis. [July 24, 2018] – “FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is encouraged by President Trump’s decision to authorize \$12 billion in economic assistance to help farmers that are facing the impact of retaliatory tariffs. We are pleased that our repeated concerns have not fallen on deaf ears.

In a letter sent to Secretary Perdue on July 13, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative and other Midwest Dairy Coalition members requested that the USDA utilize its authority to provide assistance to dairy farmers. FarmFirst has stressed the importance for immediate attention to be taken regarding the economic conditions dairy farmers are facing in order to keep their operations running.

Exports of dairy products and ingredients have greatly benefited farmers over the past several years and is becoming a more significant part of the price they receive for their milk. They must not bear the brunt of this trade war taking place.

We appreciate the prompt response that the USDA is making in regards to this issue and thank our partnered industry organizations in echoing our concerns to Secretary Perdue, the USDA and the Trump administration. We applaud the National Milk Producers Federation and the Midwest Dairy Coalition’s efforts on protecting the trade benefits dairy farmers have come to rely on.

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative will continue to advocate for meaningful trade negotiations that preserve the market access dairy has long enjoyed. More importantly, we will seek to suspend the retaliatory tariffs with major country exporters such as Mexico and China and restore the flow of dairy products between these trading partners.”

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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 cooperatives.