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## **Statement on FDA to Prioritize Review of Standards of Identity for Dairy Products**

*Madison, Wis.* [July 26, 2018] – “Significant progress was made today with Commissioner Scott Gottlieb’s statement, confirming what FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative has been stating for years – that plant-based products simply do not compare to actual dairy products’ nutritional package.

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is encouraged by Commissioner Gottlieb’s comments, as he reiterated the same concerns the cooperative has regarding public health and misleading food labels.

We support the FDA recognizing the need to reevaluate plant-based food products and return to standards of identity that verify a food possessing a ‘basic nature’ – including everything from taste, texture and mouthfeel. When using a standardized name, there are expectations that come with the use of that name, especially when it comes to ‘milk.’

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative strongly recommends that the FDA, while it does their reevaluation, enforce their current definitions for not only ‘milk’, but also ‘cheese’, ‘yogurt’, and ‘ice cream’ because the current definitions have always met consumers’ expectations.

Consumers may understand that plant-based products do not come from cows. However, by including the word milk on the labels of these imitation products, consumers are led to believe these plant-based foods have the same level of nutrition as traditional dairy products, which is not the case. Unfortunately, this assumption has harmed children, as there have been reports of children suffering from severe protein and vitamin D deficiencies.

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative will continue to engage on this issue and continue to remind legislators and the general public of the value that dairy presents consumers, even if it’s been taken for granted for the past several decades.”

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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.