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

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## **FarmFirst Commends USDA's Direct Payment Plan, Quick Turnaround to Get Funds to Producers**

*Madison, Wis.* [May 19, 2020] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative commends the Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and the USDA on their direct payment plan under the \$16 billion Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) for U.S. producers, which is open for sign-ups at Farm Service Agencies (FSA) beginning on May 26<sup>th</sup>.

“FarmFirst has been advocating that funds need to be made available for farmers quickly, so we commend the USDA for making these plans as direct payments to producers as well as receiving 80% of the funds within a week of signing up for the program,” says John Rettler, dairy farmer of Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst. “As it was described during President Trump’s press conference, farmers are the very first link in the food supply chain. Supporting U.S. farmers ultimately supports the entire food chain.”

“We strongly encourage the USDA to consider additional funding support for dairy farmers, as the industry as a whole has experienced a delayed affect on feeling the impact of the pandemic on dairy market prices. Quite frankly, the USDA’s current plan to pay only 30% of dairy’s projected losses since April 15 falls far too short of the support that dairy farmers need to stay in business, considering that much of dairy’s losses will be reflected in milkchecks paid after April 15,” says Rettler. “Dairy never stops and has not stopped during this pandemic but U.S. dairy producers will need a higher level of support to manage through this.”

For dairy, the total payment will be calculated based on a producer’s certification of milk production. The first quarter of calendar year 2020 will be multiplied by a national price decline during the same quarter. The second part of the payment is based on a national adjustment to each producer’s production in the first quarter.

*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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