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FarmFirst Sets 2021 Policy Priorities

Madison, Wis. [March 22, 2021] – At its March board meeting, the FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Board of Directors reviewed approved policies and identified this year's top priorities:

"Through our advocacy efforts over the years, FarmFirst has an established reputation in Washington, D.C. for representing dairy farmers in the Midwest. Working in stride with our industry partners ensures we get the message across to policymakers, and this year will be no exception," says John Rettler, dairy farmer in Neosho, Wis. and FarmFirst President. "After such a turbulent 2020, it is vital to have the needs of dairy farmers heard and acknowledged in good policy in 2021."

- **Post-COVID-19 Support and Economic Recovery** – In the year ahead, FarmFirst will work to ensure that the implementation of previously approved stimulus bills and any additional legislation serve the interests of dairy farmers, the agriculture community as a whole and consumers.
- **2022 Farm Bill** – FarmFirst will remain engaged in discussions related to dairy programs. Specifically, for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program, FarmFirst is looking to improve the feed cost calculator and update production history for all enrolled producers, among other modifications to further improve the program.
- **Dairy Labeling** – Advocating for the FDA to enforce their definition of milk and other dairy related terms to reduce the impeding nature of dairy alternatives continues to be a top priority. FarmFirst looks forward to working with the next FDA commissioner, to push back against misleading claims and marketing campaigns that negatively impact dairy.
- **Nutrition** – Expanding fluid milk and other dairy product options in school lunch programs is imperative since science has proven time and time again that the consumption of milk and dairy products is essential and beneficial to human health. Further, dairy needs to be a significant part of USDA's dietary guidelines.
- **Climate Change and Environmental Concerns** – FarmFirst will continue to advocate that any climate change, carbon credit, or other sustainability legislation recognize the positive contributions that the dairy industry has already made to the environment and that it can be economically justified and that it truly works for dairy farmers.
- **Ag Labor Reform** – FarmFirst recognizes the need and is actively engaged on ensuring there is a reliable, consistent, and legal workforce for the dairy industry. FarmFirst supports the Farm

Workforce Modernization Act and is working towards its passage, to provide a consistent labor force for the entire dairy industry.

- **International Trade** – Advocating for trade agreements that do not sacrifice dairy products or limit our export reach remains a leading priority for FarmFirst. Additionally, FarmFirst strongly opposes Geographical Indicators (GIs) as these provisions would limit the reach of high-quality, delicious dairy products beyond the U.S. FarmFirst also supports the enforcement of current trade agreement with Canada, Mexico, and China.
- **Federal Order Reform** – Working its partners FarmFirst is actively addressing the causes for negative Producer Price and working for solutions to numerous issues to ensure a robust market-driven price discovery formula.

During the cooperative's ninth annual meeting held on February 12, cooperative delegates approved new policy in several key areas, including federal milk order reform, international trade policy, incentive programs, and commodity advertising, research, and promotion programs. Policies adopted at the meeting guide the legislative agenda for the cooperative in the year ahead. Resolutions were submitted by cooperative members as part of the cooperative's grassroots policy development process.

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. Learn more about FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative by visiting: www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com.

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