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FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Applauds House Passage of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act

Madison, Wis. [December 9, 2021] – FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative applauds the passage by the House of Representatives of the bipartisan Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2021 (OSRA) with an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 364-60.

Unprecedented challenges have plagued supply chains affecting every corner of manufacturing in the U.S., while specifically costing the U.S. dairy industry more than \$1 billion this year alone. The plethora of issues stem from challenges securing shipping containers accompanied by record-high fees. If passed by the Senate and signed into law, the legislation will help alleviate delays and disruptions at U.S. ports that have cost the U.S. dairy industry greatly.

“The passage of this legislation in the House this week marks the first step in restoring the efficiency of our supply chains as they were pre-pandemic,” says John Rettler, dairy farmer of Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst. “The reputation of U.S. dairy has been hard-earned across the globe with our exporters, and it is important that this isn’t threatened by congestion at our ports. We applaud the immense bipartisan support this piece of legislation has received and look forward to its continued progress through the legislature. Exporting U.S. dairy products provide value to dairy farmers, who in turn work with other local businesses for a variety of services. Ensuring we can continue to move our quality U.S. dairy products offshore, efficiently and effectively, will continue to pay dividends for the U.S.”

To reiterate the importance of the legislation, FarmFirst signed a letter along with 77 other dairy cooperatives, companies and organizations to emphasize the potential positive impact the legislation could have on the U.S. dairy industry, which was sent to Congressional leaders on Dec. 8.

“Addressing these issues we’re experiencing at our ports is critical to U.S. dairy, but it is also will address issues being felt across all our supply chains. As the letter states, ocean carriers are shipping empty containers across the Pacific Ocean at record rates of over 70%. This is lost opportunity in ensuring the maximum amount of dairy exports are leaving our shores and getting into the hands of consumers in Asia and elsewhere,” say Rettler. “We look forward to the continued progress of OSRA through the Senate and seeing improvement in the shipping challenges we’ve been facing.”

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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