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Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative: Dairy group warns of dangers of new U.S. tariffs

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Contact: Jamie Mara
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
(920) 209-3990 | jmara@voiceofmilk.com

GREEN BAY, Wis. — A group representing hundreds of Midwestern dairy farmers issued a statement today regarding the newly imposed tariffs by the United States on steel and aluminum from Canada, the European Union and Mexico. The tariffs, which took effect today, are causing retaliatory levies, including on U.S. cheese and yogurt exports.

The following comments are from Brody Stapel, president of the board of directors for Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative, who has a dairy farm in Cedar Grove, Wis.:

“Dairy farmers and processors simply cannot afford a trade war that will choke off access to major partners. This is especially true of Mexico, which buys nearly a quarter of all dairy products exported by the United States. That amounted to $1.3 billion last year, enough to support 1,500 dairy farms and 25,000 jobs. The stakes are high.

“U.S. dairy has become an important player in the global marketplace. The fallout from the tariffs, which underscores how interconnected the markets are, would undermine this progress. With the demand for protein steadily growing around the world, we have tremendous opportunities and we need to be free to pursue them.

“Edge has a straightforward trade objective: Expand access to global markets with

no net loss to existing ones. We should be nurturing more trade opportunities and not disrupting long-standing favorable relationships.

“That is the message we are communicating to the administration, particularly top-level officials at U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, as well as our members of Congress.

“We hope this tariff approach is not the endgame and that there will be a quick and favorable resolution to prevent what could be tragic losses for farmers and the businesses that support them.”

About Edge:

Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative provides nearly 800 dairy farmers in nine Midwestern states with a strong voice — the voice of milk — in Congress, with customers and within their communities. Under the Federal Milk Marketing Orders, the co-op also provides milk testing verification services and market information. Edge, based in Green Bay, Wis., is one of the top cooperatives in the country based on the amount of milk produced by its members. For more information, visit voiceofmilk.com.