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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Farm groups organize around Dairy Together Roadshow** *National tour aims to present potential solutions to dairy crisis*

**CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI** – The current state of the U.S. dairy economy is putting family farms out of business. Over the last 10 years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recorded the loss of roughly 17,000 dairy herds, cutting the total number of U.S herds by nearly one third.

Several family farm groups focused on improving the dairy economy are organizing a national Dairy Together Roadshow this spring to present options rooted in research and to engage farmers and policy makers in conversations to move the dairy industry forward.

Last winter, Wisconsin Farmers Union enlisted dairy economists Mark Stephenson from the University of Wisconsin and Chuck Nicholson from Cornell to conduct an Analysis of Selected Dairy Programs to Reduce Volatility in Milk Prices and Farm Income. The Roadshow will unveil the researchers' data on several potential supply management programs' impacts on net farm operating income, farm numbers, domestic demand and cost to the government versus the current Margin Protection Program.

"The bottom line on what we found was generally pretty positive in terms of thinking of what these programs could do," Nicholson said. "We saw reduced variation in prices and also some price enhancement, increased net farm operating incomes, reduction in the rate of farm exits across farms of all sizes, and a reduction in government expenditures on dairy programs."

Stephenson added that projections under the current MPP show substantial payments of more than a billion dollars being doled out in the next couple years.

"It's worth noting, the programs we looked at don't cost the government anything," Stephenson said. "In fact they reduce the government programs that are already part of law."

Farmers of all backgrounds are encouraged to attend the Roadshow events, which are being organized by the National Farmers Union, National Farmers Organization, Holstein Association USA, and state Farmers Union organizations from Wisconsin, New England, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, California, and the Rocky Mountain region.

Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden stressed that with many more family farms on the brink of closure, now is the time to enact bold solutions to halt the loss of dairy farms.

"We are focused on policy changes that align with our organizations' core values of family farming, fair economic policies, and thriving rural communities," Von Ruden said. "We're looking



beyond milk labeling, increasing exports, and dairy insurance plans to actual long-term solutions."

Sign up for updates, register for events, view a video analysis of the dairy research, and learn more at [www.dairytogether.com](http://www.dairytogether.com). Locations will include:

#### **NORTHEAST**

- **Cortland, New York:** March 28, 11am-2pm, New York State Grange Building, 100 Grange Place. Includes lunch. RSVP at DairyTogether.com, or by calling the NFO Cortland office at 844-378-4169 or local 607-543-4169.
- **Brattleboro, Vermont:** April 3rd, 11am-2pm, Holstein Association USA Headquarters, Brattleboro, VT. Includes lunch. RSVP at DairyTogether.com, or by calling Roger Noonan, New England Farmers Union, 603-487-2540. Handicapped parking available at the meeting location: 1 Holstein Pl. All others can park in the nearby municipal parking center: 77 Flat Street.

#### **WISCONSIN**

- **Oshkosh, Wisconsin:** March 27, 10am-noon, WPS Farm Show, EAA Grounds (Hospitality Room inside Hangar A), 1001 Waukau Ave. Free for WPS Farm Show attendees but you must pay \$3 per vehicle to park.
- **Eau Claire, Wisconsin:** April 2, 11am-2pm, 29 Pines, 5872 33rd Ave. Includes lunch.
- **Platteville, Wisconsin:** April 4, 12-2:30pm, UW-Platteville Pioneer Farm, 29200 College Farm Rd. Includes lunch.  
RSVP for the Wisconsin event of your choosing at [dairytogether.com](http://dairytogether.com), or by calling WFU at 715-723-5561.

#### **MICHIGAN**

- **St. Johns, Michigan:** April 9, 11:30am-2:30pm, Agroliquid Headquarters, 3055 M-21. Includes lunch. RSVP at [dairytogether.com](http://dairytogether.com) or to Jackie McAlvey at 989-285-2547.

#### **MINNESOTA**

- **Greenwald, Minnesota:** April 16, 10am-12pm, Greenwald Pub, 310 1st Ave. N. Lunch to follow. RSVP at [dairytogether.com](http://dairytogether.com) or to Bruce Miller at 651-470-5438.

#### **CALIFORNIA**

- **Modesto, California:** April 29, 2-4pm, Stanislaus County Agricultural Center, 3022 Service Rd. RSVP at [www.DairyTogether.com](http://www.DairyTogether.com) or by calling Lynne McBride at 925-385-0217.

#### **NEW MEXICO**

- **Clovis, New Mexico,** details to-be-announced.