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Dairy

NMFP calls for increased dairy aid in wake of tariffs

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

Dairy farmers are asking the Trump administration to recognize the significant economic losses dairy producers are suffering due to the imposition of tariffs on major trading partners and those partners' retaliatory tariffs on imports of U.S. dairy products.

National Milk Producers Federation calculates those losses for the last half of 2018 at \$1.5 billion, and its board of directors this week passed a resolution calling for federal aid commensurate to that damage.

"In light of the administration's decision to establish a program to compensate farmers for the damage caused by these retaliatory tariffs, we call on the president to direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide assistance to dairy producers at a level that reflects the damage they have caused," the resolution states.

The initial USDA mitigation package announced in August allocated just \$127 million in payments to dairy farmers, representing 12 cents per hundredweight of milk on 50 percent of producers' production. The agency has indicated a second round of assistance might be made this year.

"USDA is still preparing the second tranche of assistance, looking at their formulas and circumstances of different commodities," Alan Bjerga, NMPF senior vice president of communications, said.

NMPF wants that assistance to be at levels commensurate with dairy producers' losses, as opposed to the first round of assistance — which was way off, he said.

"There's a big discrepancy between the pain producers have faced" and USDA's calculated losses, he said.

USDA's own monthly World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates showed a drop in its forecasted milk prices for 2018 of 70 cents per hundredweight between its June and July updates, equating to a loss of \$1.5 billion for the year, NMPF said in a letter to USDA.

NMPF also commissioned two studies on the impact to dairy farmers, one by Informa Agribusiness Consulting and one by Texas A&M. Those studies calculated losses of \$1.5 billion and \$1.17 billion, respectively.

Based on a \$1.5 billion loss and using USDA's formula for assistance, payments would work out to \$1.40 per hundredweight, a little shy of 12 times the 12 cents per hundredweight paid to producers in the first round of assistance, Peter Vitaliano, NMPF vice president of economic policy and market research, said.

"We're not calling for USDA to match dollar for dollar, but there's really a yawning gap," Bjerga said.

Assistance should be closer to the damage, he said.

Lynne McBride, executive director of California Dairy Campaign, said 12 cents per hundredweight on half of the country's milk production is only 6 cents per hundredweight.

"It doesn't even come close" to the losses producers are suffering, she said.

"We just don't have a safety net anymore in the U.S. when milk prices drop," she said.

And that leads to a need for supply management, she said.

"More dairy farmers are looking at this than ever before," she said.

CDC is pushing for inventory management in federal farm policy, but it is also critical that trade mitigation assistance be tied to some sort of supply management to bring inventory in line with markets, she said.



Idaho dairy farmer Tom Dorsey, center, is awarded the Richard E. Lyng Award for his contributions and distinguished service to dairy promotion. He is joined by Dairy West CEO Karianne Fallow and NDB Chairman Brad Scott.

Courtesy Dairy Management Inc.

Idaho dairyman honored for contributions to dairy promotion

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

Tom Dorsey, a Caldwell, Idaho, dairy farmer was awarded the Richard E Lyng Award for his years of service to dairy promotion, both regionally and nationally.

He was presented the award by the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board (NDB) during the joint NDB, National Milk Producers Federation and United Dairy Industry Association annual meeting in Phoenix.

The award is designed to recognize leaders in the dairy community, specifically farmers, Karianne Fallow, CEO of Dairy West, said.

Ensuring that there is a strong future as a legacy to others has always been important to Dorsey, she said.

The award is named for former USDA Secretary Richard E. Lyng, who played a critical role in implementing policies that led to the establishment of the NDB more than 30 years ago. The Lyng Award honors leaders who have made a significant contribution to dairy promotion that benefits the entire industry.

"Tom represents the very

best of farmer leadership," Brad Scott, a California dairy farmer and chairman of the NDB, said in presenting the award.

"He demonstrates endless support for dairy promotion and continuously seeks to make the checkoff the best it can be locally and nationally," he said.

Dorsey has an unassuming, bold leadership style and has used that style to move the industry forward, Fallow said.

He helped the industry take steps to be relevant and keep up with a dynamically challenging world, she said.

Dorsey served on the Idaho Dairy Products Commission board of directors since 2004 and was elected chairman of the commission in 2011 — a position he held until he voluntarily stepped down earlier this year.

As chairman, he led efforts to unite Idaho and Utah dairy farmers to create a stronger, more cohesive dairy-promotion group. That resulted in the formation of Dairy West in 2017 to allow greater flexibility, growth and the effective use of farmers' checkoff investments, and Dorsey served as its first chairman.

"He has a very friendly, appealing way about him, and people are drawn to him easily. He was the guy to walk into a conversation and light it up," Fallow said.

He also served as a member of the United Dairy Industry Association board for many years and served as UDIA's first vice chairman.

"Tom exemplifies the meaning of service ... he has had an important influence on our farmers and our dairy community, and we are grateful for his many contributions," Scott said.

Fallow said Dorsey is very caring with a very likeable sense of humor and was always the first to help out new, young leaders on dairy boards.

"He took service really seriously," she said.

Dorsey has retired from the boards he served on for years and is retiring from the dairy business, she said.

"But I expect he'll find a way to stay connected," she said.

As part of the Richard E. Lyng Award, the NDB will contribute \$2,500 to the Utah State University Department of Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences in Dorsey's name.

Survey: Consumers think alternatives equivalent to milk

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

A consumer study released by the National Milk Producers Foundation found that the majority of adults surveyed believe alternative milk products are nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk.

NMFP argues that assumption poses a public health risk and contends the FDA needs to end the deceptive labeling of such products as almond milk.

Performed by Ipsos, a global market research firm, the survey of more than 2,000 adults found 77 percent of them view almond milk as having the same or more protein compared with dairy milk. It also found 68 percent believe it has the same or more key nutrients as cow's milk.

Similar results were found for soy and coconut milks.

"We certainly felt that a lot of the findings bolster our case," Alan Bjerga, NMPF senior vice president of communications, said.

For instance, the majority of those surveyed believe almond milk is nutritionally equal to or superior to real milk, when in reality it only contains one-eighth of the protein of cow's milk, he said.

Surveys have been done in the past to determine if consumers are confused about the source of alternative products, and the plant-food industry has tied the label debate to that issue saying consumers are not confused, he said.

Consumers know that milk alternatives are made from different stuff, but they think the nutrition is similar to real dairy when often it is inferior, he said.

"The confusion is about

the nutritional content of these beverages," he said.

Media and anecdotal reports suggest parents are feeding these dairy alternatives to children thinking they are providing sufficient nutrition, he said.

"They think they're the same thing, and they are very different," he said.

And it's not their fault. The alternative products are packaged and labeled like dairy products and stocked in the dairy case. Consumers are relying on that cue and not the nutrition label, he said.

The data shows consumers are being misled about the nutritional merits of cow's milk versus plant-based alternatives, Jim Mulhern, NMPF president and CEO, said in a press release.

"The plant-based food and beverage industry has used FDA inaction as a cover to sell consumers a product that is heavily processed to look like real milk but doesn't deliver what matters most — a consistent high-quality package of nutrients," he said.

He said that's contrary to the national goal of a healthy population and FDA's mission to promote transparency and fairness.

With media reports suggesting more U.S. children suffer from nutritionally inadequate diets, milk labeling "is much more than a sideshow over whether consumers can tell the difference between an almond and a cow," he said.

FDA needs to help consumers by clearly distinguishing between true milk and water-heavy, nutrition-poor imitators and immediately end the application of the term "milk" to non-dairy products, he said.

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