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Dairy Groups Urge Passage of Three FTAs to Grow Jobs in the USA

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) submitted comments to the House Committee on Ways and Means regarding a hearing held today on the pending Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Colombia, Panama and South Korea. The focus of the hearing was to examine the job creating potential of the three trade agreements.

NMPF and USDEC voiced support for all three FTAs and urged swift congressional passage of each. However, remarks from NMPF and USDEC centered heavily on the tremendous export potential posed by the Korea-U.S. FTA.

“The anticipated growth in our exports of cheese, whey, skim milk powder, and other dairy products will help bolster milk prices for America’s dairy farms, and help to support additional jobs in the dairy processing and transportation sectors,” said Jerry Kozak, president and CEO of NMPF. “In fact, we estimate that such an increase in U.S. dairy exports would mean as many as 10,000 additional U.S. jobs, on and off the farm.

Tom Suber, president of USDEC concurred, adding, “The Korea–U.S. Free Trade Agreement will provide the best opportunity to expand U.S. dairy exports since the U.S.–Mexico portion of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Our industry is very eager to take advantage of this opportunity, particularly considering the speed with which Korea has negotiated FTAs with other major dairy exporters such as the European Union.”



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The dairy organizations also expressed hope that the FTAs with Colombia and Panama would also be approved, citing the anticipated \$50 million annual average increase in net benefits to the U.S. dairy industry upon passage of both trade agreements. NMPF and USDEC stressed that the estimates pertaining to the FTAs assume the United States is able to make full use of the new market access opportunities negotiated for in each of these agreements.

“We urge Congress to move without any further delay to approve the Korea-U.S. FTA that is so economically meaningful for the dairy industry, as well as other sectors of our economy,” said Kozak. “We also would like to see the Panama and Colombia FTAs advanced to Congress at the earliest opportunity given the benefits that these agreements would also offer to an industry that sorely needs all the expanded market opportunities we can capture.”

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The U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) is a non-profit, independent membership organization that represents the global trade interests of U.S. dairy producers, proprietary processors and cooperatives, ingredient suppliers and export traders. Its mission is to enhance U.S. global competitiveness and assist the U.S. industry to increase its global dairy ingredient sales and exports of U.S. dairy products. USDEC accomplishes this through programs in market development that build global demand for U.S. dairy products, resolve market access barriers and advance industry trade policy goals. USDEC is supported by staff across the United States and overseas in Mexico, South America, Asia, Middle East and Europe.

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), based in Arlington, Va., develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of U.S. dairy producers and the cooperatives they collectively own. The members of NMPF's 31 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of nearly 40,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF's activities, visit www.nmpf.org.