



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, May 11, 2017

**CONTACTS:**

Christopher Galen, NMPF: (703) 243-6111

Mark O'Keefe, USDEC: (703) 528-3049

**NAFTA Relationships Need Attention as NMPF, USDEC Begin Work with  
New U.S. Trade Representative Lighthizer**

ARLINGTON, VA – The dairy industry is eager to work with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to protect and expand market access for U.S. dairy while addressing problematic Canadian dairy policies, the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) said today following Lighthizer's Senate confirmation.

Lighthizer will begin work on a variety of pressing trade policy issues, including the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), expanding market access channels in Asia, and preventing the loss of common food names.

"We welcome Mr. Lighthizer's confirmation because of his grasp of global trade rules and understanding of the importance of balanced trade agreements to the U.S. dairy sector," said NMPF President and CEO Jim Mulhern. "We will continue to urge USTR to focus on protecting Mexico, our No. 1 market, insist that Canada revoke its detrimental new milk pricing policy, and pursue additional export opportunities around the world."

Another significant challenge for Ambassador Lighthizer is the European Union's aggressive stance on the use of geographic indications (GIs). Not only must the United States resist using GIs at home, Lighthizer has said, it should discourage other countries from agreeing to use them, as well.

"As the Trump Administration's trade policy strategy develops, we want to build upon the U.S. government's past successes in pushing back against the EU's global GI agenda," said Tom Vilsack, president and CEO of USDEC. "We also want to examine opportunities for bilateral trade agreements in key markets like Japan." Vilsack recently visited Japan on a trade mission.

Lighthizer's experience includes deputy trade representative under President Ronald Reagan, chief of staff for the Senate Finance Committee, as well as direct private sector experience in enforcing trade rules on behalf of his clients.

###

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 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF's activities, visit [www.nmpf.org](http://www.nmpf.org).

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.