



National Milk Producers Federation

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January 5, 2023

Agri-Mark, Inc.
Associated Milk Producers Inc.
Bongards' Creameries
Burnett Dairy Cooperative
California Dairies, Inc.
Cayuga Marketing Cooperative Milk Producers Association
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.
Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative
First District Association
Foremost Farms USA
Land O' Lakes, Inc.
Lone Star Milk Producers
Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association
Michigan Milk Producers Association
Mount Joy Farmers Cooperative Association
Northwest Dairy Association
Oneida-Madison Milk Producers Cooperative Association
Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.
Scioto Cooperative Milk Producers' Association
Southeast Milk, Inc.
Tillamook County Creamery Association
United Dairymen of Arizona
Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc.

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

U.S. dairy producers and the cooperatives they own are grateful for your ongoing efforts to support dairy farmers across the country through numerous initiatives -- from conservation and climate mitigation programs to trade issues, as well as Federal Milk Marketing Orders, Dairy Margin Coverage and other risk management programs. However, natural disasters coupled with increased input costs have forced dairy farmers and their cooperatives to confront significant headwinds in recent months.

As you prepare to implement assistance to dairy farmers and cooperatives that experienced losses due to natural disasters including Winter Storm Uri, as well as droughts, excessive heat, floods, and fires, we urge you to include relief for farmers and cooperatives that suffered significant losses last month due to Winter Storm Elliott, especially in Upstate New York.

While Elliott paralyzed various parts of the U.S. for several days, it did particularly significant damage in the Buffalo, NY area, causing major economic losses due to dairy plant closures and extensive dumping of milk due to the inability of farmers to have their milk picked up and delivered.

Congress provided additional disaster assistance funding for agriculture in the recently enacted Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, including for milk and for winter storms for calendar year 2022, so we are hopeful that your department can draw on these funds and other resources as appropriate to help New York dairy farmers and cooperatives recover from this unanticipated and severe challenge.

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Separately, as you know, the issue of drought and access to water in the West continues to be a serious problem affecting agriculture producers, including dairy farmers in multiple western states. We must resolve this issue to preserve the future of agriculture in the West. We are eager to work with you as you determine how best to use the tools at your disposal while also collaborating with your interagency partners to inform them of agriculture's critical needs.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Our members would like to meet with your team to provide additional information regarding Winter Storm Elliott as well as western water issues.

Sincerely,



Jim Mulhern
President & CEO
National Milk Producers Federation

cc: The Honorable Charles Schumer, United States Senator
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand, United States Senator
The Honorable Brian Higgins, Representative-elect
The Honorable Nicholas Langworthy, Representative-elect
The Honorable Claudia Tenney, Representative-elect

