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Dairy Groups Praise House Approval of Bill on U.S.- Russia Trade Relations

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) praised the House of Representatives' approval this week of H.R. 6156, which would establish permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) with Russia. NMPF and USDEC have actively supported approval of PNTR with Russia as part of work necessary to reopen that market to U.S. exporters.

The Russia dairy market has been closed to U.S. dairy products for more than two years due to Russian insistence on certain dairy certificate statements and accompanying facility inspection requirements that were not acceptable to the U.S.

"This is a significant step forward on the path to reopening one of the world's largest dairy importing markets," said Tom Suber, president of USDEC. "USDEC has been working extensively to help provide a firm basis for restoring access for U.S. dairy exporters to Russia. More is needed beyond PNTR to achieve that goal but approval of PNTR is a vital piece of puzzle."

"NMPF hopes that House action today will help to spur swift action by the Senate to also approve PNTR with Russia so that we can move closer to re-establishing exports of U.S. cheese, butter and other products to benefit of America's dairy producers," said Jerry Kozak, president and CEO of NMPF. "This is a major market with solid opportunities for our industry and it is critical to ensure we have the same access to it that our competitors around the world enjoy."



Both organizations also stressed the importance of a strong focus by the Administration on resolving the ongoing dairy certificate and related technical requirements that currently block U.S. dairy shipments. NMPF and USDEC believe that it is critical to continue to move forward with active and aggressive efforts to resolve these issues at the same time that Congress works to pass PNTR legislation.

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 30 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.

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