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Dairy Farmers Call on State Legislature to Reject CDFA Secretary's Dairy Bill
Passage of AB 2730 Would Lead to Greater Loss of Dairies Statewide

TURLOCK, CA (August 25, 2014) – California Dairy Campaign (CDC) President Joe Augusto called upon members of the California State Legislature to vote against AB 2730 introduced by Assembly Member Susan Eggman, D-Stockton, and State Senator Christine Galgiani, D-Stockton, and put forward by California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Secretary Karen Ross that would call for a sweeping and unprecedented overhaul of dairy producer pricing in the state.

“Few have seen the final language of CDFA Secretary Ross’s bill, AB 2730, and that is by design,” CDC President Joe Augusto explained. “Secretary Ross is waiting until the final days of the California State Legislative Session to introduce a bill that would eliminate milk pricing regulations that dairy producers rely upon as a lifeline when prices drop,” he added. “When this issue was discussed and debated years ago, a CDFA study concluded that deregulation as called for in AB 2730 would shift virtually all risk to producers and it is just shameful that years later she is attempting to gut our minimum pricing laws in such an underhanded way.”

AB 2730 would eliminate minimum pricing and pooling regulations on the largest Class of milk, Class 4 totaling approximately 80 percent of all milk produced in the state. California is the top milk producing state in the nation and such dramatic regulatory changes would impact dairy farmers across the state and nation. In Wisconsin, the state with the second highest milk production, milk pricing regulations are in effect and dairy farmers are paid significantly higher prices. Years ago federal order hearings concluded that deregulation as called for in AB 2730 is inequitable to dairy producers and processors.

“Dairy farmers in the federal order system have the opportunity to vote when substantive changes are made to dairy farmer pricing regulations and Secretary Ross is denying California dairy farmers that fundamental right,” explained CDC Executive Director Lynne McBride. More than 400 dairies have gone out of business in the last five years and fewer than 1500 dairies remain in California. A significant reason for the drop in the number of dairies is due to the fact that California dairy farmer prices rank lowest in the nation and AB 2730 would drive the price paid to dairy farmers even lower. “The Secretary is claiming there is consensus in support of AB 2730 and yet that could not be further from the truth. Dairy farmers across the state strongly object to the radical changes in dairy pricing regulations called for in AB 2730,” concluded McBride.

California Dairy Campaign (CDC) is a grassroots organization of dairy farmers who are working to encourage lawmakers and the dairy industry to be more responsive to the needs of the family dairy farm in California. CDC is a member organization of California Farmers Union (CFU). Comprised of more than 1300 farmer, and rancher members, California Farmers Union advocates policies to lawmakers at the state and national levels on behalf of its membership throughout California. CFU is a state chapter of National Farmers Union (NFU), which represents more than 250,000 members nationwide.

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