



**For Immediate Release**  
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**Email: [lmcb44@comcast.net](mailto:lmcb44@comcast.net)**

**Contact: Lynne McBride**  
**Phone: 925-385-0217**  
**Office Phone : 209-632-0885**

**Decline in Number of California Dairies Continued in 2013**  
*CDC Calls for California to Join Federal Order to Sustain State's Remaining Dairies*

**TURLOCK, CA (March 11, 2014)** — According to data recently released by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), 67 dairies closed their doors across the state in 2013. To prevent more dairies from going out of business, the California Dairy Campaign (CDC) is calling for California to join the federal milk marketing order (FMMO) system to bring prices paid to dairy farmers in California in line with prices paid in other states.

“Our state lost 67 dairies and more than 45,000 cows in 2013,” CDC President Joe Augusto stated. “Given that each cow generates more than \$34,000 in economic activity each year, the closure of these dairies has caused the loss of more than \$1.4 billion in economic activity and more than 11,000 jobs,” he explained.

“There are fewer than 1500 dairies remaining in California, and a significant reason for the drop in the number of dairies is due to the fact that prices paid to California dairy producers are significantly lower than prices paid in the federal order,” stated Augusto. “Passage of the ‘California Federal Milk Marketing Order Act’ was our top priority and now that it has been signed into law in the 2014 farm bill, we have the authority necessary to move to join the federal order system and sustain dairies statewide.” The 2014 farm bill included the “California Federal Milk Marketing Order Act” introduced by Reps. David Valadao, R-21, and Jim Costa, D-16, which would enable California to retain its state quota program in the federal order system.

“In just the last two years, more than 170 dairies have gone out of business,” stated CDC Executive Director Lynne McBride. “Although producer prices are better this year, great concern remains about rising feed costs due to the historic drought. California dairy producers can no longer afford to be underpaid compared to dairy farmers in the federal order,” she added. “Joining the federal order system will bring California producer prices in line with prices in the rest of the country and prevent more dairies from going out of business.”

“Under the new farm bill it is more important for California to join the federal order because the margin insurance program, the new dairy safety net, will have substantially less benefit to California dairy producers until our prices are brought in alignment with the rest of the country,” California Farmers Union (CFU) President Joaquin Contente warned.

Comprised of more than 1300 farmer, and rancher members, CFU advocates policies to lawmakers at the state and national levels on behalf of its membership throughout California. CDC, a member organization, 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. CFU is a state chapter of NFU, which represents more than 250,000 members nationwide.

325 Mitchell Avenue, Turlock, CA 95380  
P.O. Box 1957, Turlock, CA 95381

(209)632-0885 Fax: (209)632-5262  
Email: [lmcb44@comcast.net](mailto:lmcb44@comcast.net)

[www.californiadairycampaign.com](http://www.californiadairycampaign.com)  
[www.californiafarmersunion.org](http://www.californiafarmersunion.org)