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NATIONAL MILK
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Dairy Groups Support the Cuba Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act

Arlington, VA – The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) applauded yesterday's introduction of a House bill that would allow for open travel for all Americans to Cuba and further facilitate U.S. agricultural exports to that nation.

The Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act (H.R. 4645) was offered by House Agriculture Committee Chairman, Collin Peterson, and is currently co-sponsored by 33 other Members of Congress, including Representatives Jerry Moran of Kansas, Rosa L. DeLauro of Connecticut and Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri.

Notably, the bill would establish clarity and predictability regarding the "cash-in-advance" provision of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (TSREEA) by ensuring its interpretation according to the original intent of Congress to allow for payment in a manner that did not impede trade, while also not offering the extension of credit to Cuba. Prior interpretations of this provision have hampered U.S. dairy exporters' ability to ship product to Cuba in a safe and cost-efficient manner.

The legislation would also remove a costly and unnecessary burden on U.S. agricultural exporters by allowing payment to pass from Cuba directly to U.S. banks in place of the current, more costly, requirement that payments be routed through banks in other countries.

The other critical element that H.R. 4645 would tackle is to abolish restrictions on Americans' rights to travel to Cuba. This would facilitate U.S. exporters' ability to conduct business with Cuba, spurring greater demand for U.S. agricultural products.



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“This bill would help to address administrative and technical barriers to U.S. dairy exports to Cuba that are not in keeping with the original spirit and intent of Congress when it determined that we should be able to export agricultural products to Cuba roughly ten years ago,” said Tom Suber, President of the U.S. Dairy Export Council. “The Cuban market holds significant promise for U.S. dairy exporters but has become increasingly difficult to supply within the past few years.”

“We believe that actions such as this legislation that serve to foster greater export opportunities for U.S. dairy products are the types of market building activities that our government should be working on in order to help expand the market for our dairy producers’ quality products,” said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of the National Milk Producers Federation.

NMPF and USDEC are urging all Members of Congress to support this legislation to help recreate the export markets so badly needed to in order to help restore the profitability and future viability of America’s dairy industry.

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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 32 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.