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New sustainability group welcomes first dairy processor

GREEN BAY, Wis. (Dec. 19, 2016) — Foremost Farms USA® has joined the Dairy Strong Sustainability Alliance — a diverse group of partners who have come together to ensure that all touchpoints in the production of dairy foods are continuously improving.

This new alliance is a collaborative group that represents all aspects of the dairy community: farmers, processors conservation groups, vendors and service providers, consumer packaged goods companies, retailers, government agencies, universities and dairy and trade non-profits. The goal is to show tangible continuous improvements in animal care, environmental conservation, food safety and other practices.

The Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association endorsed the alliance from its start this past August, and Foremost Farms, headquartered in Baraboo, Wis., represents the first dairy processor that will contribute aggregate data, both from farms and the processing facilities.

“Our customers and their consumers ask questions every day about modern-day dairy farm and dairy plant practices. Farmers and processors are working to produce nutritious dairy products environmentally, socially and economically better. Tracing those continuous improvements on-farm and in our plants and amplifying the results with our customers will help us grow sustainable markets for milk,” says Michael Doyle, Foremost Farms president & CEO.

The alliance focuses on establishing “milksheds” throughout Wisconsin. A milkshed is a group of farms working together with a dairy processor. Farmers and their processor use established tools to measure their environmental footprint and track progress toward being more sustainable. By combining farm data with processor data, a more complete story can be relayed to customers about the overall sustainability of Wisconsin's dairy community.

“Foremost Farms has been recognized nationally for innovative processing techniques that save energy, water and reduce emissions. The cooperative has also already piloted an environmental stewardship program with a group of diverse farmer-members,” said Maria Woldt, the sustainability lead for the alliance and director of industry relations for the Dairy Business Association, a Wisconsin-based partner in the alliance. “They are a natural fit for the Dairy Strong Sustainability Alliance and we hope other processors will follow their lead.”

Foremost Farms, along with representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Yahara Pride Farms, Peninsula Pride Farms, U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, Dairy Business Milk Marketing Cooperative, American Society of Agronomy, Wisconsin Farm Bureau and the Dairy Business Association are part of the working group charged with developing the program.

Farmers and processors will use nationally recognized tools from Field to Market, Innovation Center for US Dairy and the National Dairy F.A.R.M. Program as well as several in-state tools to measure results. The alliance is seeking collaborators to leverage strengths that will improve the program. Farmers and dairy processors are being recruited to participate in a 2017 pilot program.



About the Dairy Strong Sustainability Alliance: Organized in the spring of 2016, the goal of the DSSA is to show tangible improvement throughout the dairy supply chain in the areas of land use, soil conservation, nutrient management, water quality and use, energy use, animal care, food safety, greenhouse emissions, economic health and social responsibility. The DSSA achieves these goals by applying existing sustainability tools to efforts led by farmers and dairy processors. To learn more, visit dairystrong.org/sustainability.

About Foremost Farms: Foremost Farms USA (www.foremostfarms.com), headquartered in Baraboo, Wis., is a farmer-owned milk processing and marketing cooperative with about 1,300 members and annual sales of \$1.5 billion. The business ranks eighth among U.S. dairy cooperatives and 28th among all U.S. dairy processors annual sales. Foremost Farms focuses on the creation of tailored and innovative milk solutions that meet the needs of customers around the world.

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