September 22, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250

John Barsa  
Acting Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
Ronald Reagan Building
Washington, D.C. 20523-1000

Dear Secretary Perdue and Acting Administrator Barsa:

America’s dairy farmers have long been proud of their vital role in not only feeding America, but also in helping feed our neighbors in need around the world. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to threaten reliable and affordable access to food supplies in many developing nations, the U.S. is presented with a crucial opportunity to continue this honorable mission by ensuring that American dairy products are distributed to those facing a dire hunger crisis.

I am writing today to encourage the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to work together to purchase nonfat dry milk powder from U.S. farmers who, because of disrupted domestic markets, have an abundance of supply that could be donated to those nations lacking sufficient food supplies and unable to fully meet those needs commercially.

Dairy plays an important role in a healthy diet and milk powder specifically serves a vital function as a key source of high-quality protein and a number of micro-nutrients. This is a versatile dairy ingredient that can help fulfill key nutrient needs for healthy child development and adult wellness.

USDA and USAID must closely coordinate their efforts and diligently work to ensure that nonfat dry milk powder is quickly purchased and then efficiently donated to our international partners. National Milk Producers Federation, representing America’s dairy producers and their farmer-owned cooperatives, stands ready to assist in whatever way that we can.

I thank you both for your incredible leadership and efforts to ensure that no one goes hungry during this unprecedented global crisis. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with your staff at a time convenient to your agencies. Jaime Castaneda of my staff will reach out to discuss this important opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jim Mulhern  
President & CEO
National Milk Producers Federation