



May 18, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Perdue,

Our global community is in crisis. The COVID-19 virus has created a humanitarian disaster that touches every corner of the world. The sheer scope of the food crisis alone is unlike any we have witnessed in a generation as disrupted supply chains and economic downturns have devastated farmers and left millions around the world without reliable access to food. The United States must not let COVID-19 exacerbate global hunger, and we encourage you to use all tools at your disposal through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and in conjunction with your colleagues at the U.S. Department of State, to ensure high-quality, nutritious U.S. dairy products are made available to our international neighbors in need.

As you know, dairy products provide key nutrients necessary for healthy child development and for adult health. Some developing nations with sizable vulnerable populations are lacking reliable and affordable access to wholesome food; dairy products are an essential nutrition source that can help meet this need. Working together, we have an important opportunity to put your motto into action at this critical moment: Do right and feed everyone.

Despite the challenging conditions under which rural America is currently operating, our dairy farmers and processors are working hard every day to keep dairy products moving to market. As a nation, we are blessed to have an abundance of dairy available, even during this difficult time. Taking steps to share that abundance with the world will provide a lifeline for regions where food is needed while supplying an additional outlet for American farmers to share their abundance of dairy products.

America's dairy farmers, farmer-owned cooperatives and dairy processors stand ready and willing to work with your office in order to ensure that food aid efforts are implemented in the most efficient manner possible to bring mutual benefit to communities both at home and abroad, while operating within the boundaries of our existing international trade agreements. Food aid initiatives have also traditionally enjoyed bipartisan approval, and now, more than ever, we should strengthen these efforts to reach those who need additional support.

We encourage a focus in particular on countries that have indicated a food or nutrition deficit in their country during these times and that lack the infrastructure or resources to reliably deliver dairy supplies through robust commercial channels. To this end, the provision of dairy products should be used in a

manner that fills a void at no cost to the recipient markets, rather than commercialized in a manner that could displace sales and thereby worsen the impact of the pandemic further.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support America's farmers as they continue to work on the front lines feeding our nation, and the world, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Vilsack
President and CEO
U.S. Dairy Export Council



James Mulhern
President and CEO
National Milk Producers
Federation



Michael Dykes
President and CEO
International Dairy Foods
Association

cc: Secretary Mike Pompeo, Department of State