



*Representing Alberta's dairy producers*

## **Alberta's Dairy Farmers Respond to Trump Taking Aim at Dairy Farmers**

April 21, 2017

Statement from Chairman Tom Kootstra:

On April 18, President Trump took aim at the dairy industry by stating that we were being unfair. On behalf of the 521 dairy farmers in Alberta, we disagree and need to set the record straight.

We're not going to shy away or be bullied from promoting our proudly Canadian product. Our marketing system works in our country and it's not for other countries to determine what the best fit is for Canadians. We know supply management has served our country very well through many trade agreements.

Recently, there have been conversations around our relationship with the USA. Let us be clear: there have been no changes to Canadian regulations related to dairy imports, taxes or dairy tariffs. We are pricing our product competitively by adapting to our changing market. We did this through introducing a new class of milk which allows us to be more competitive with milk components coming into Canada.

Processors can still purchase their milk components from anywhere they would like to. Canadian processors are choosing to purchase Canadian components as they are now priced more competitively via the world market.

The second part of the equation is the fact that the American and world markets are oversaturated with milk. There is no market for all the milk that is being produced. This leads to depressed prices and no market for the excess production, the loss of income, and markets will force some farmers out of business. That's what sadly happened in Wisconsin earlier in April. Those 75 farms have families just like we all do and are surely equally passionate about farming, which makes this exceptionally emotional. When we have similar downturns in Canada, all producers share equitably in the reduction not just a selection few.

We have supply management to ensure that we don't experience that volatility in Canada. We produce what the Canadian market needs and it has evolved and continues to work for Canadians. We continue to appreciate the support from our government. Prime Minister Trudeau stated on April 21, 2017, "In Canada, we'll continue to implement supply management. It works for our farmers, it works for our agricultural industry and it works for Canadians."

We value a thriving relationship with our friends to the south, but we need to be honest that this is not about trade restrictions, but using more Canadian products and an oversaturated American market.

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