Dear Dr. Jacobs-Young

I am writing on behalf of the American Dairy Science Association. We are the professional society for dairy scientists representing professionals in all areas of dairy science including producers. We strongly support modernizing the dairy research facility of the US Dairy Forage Research Center (USDFRC) at Prairie du Sac (PdS), WI by providing badly needed new facilities.

Modern, well-planned facilities are critical to the ability of the USDFRC to generate needed research for the future of the dairy industry, for forage producers and the food security of the country. The current dairy is 39 years old. The staff has worked hard to maintain the facility with funds available, but its basic structure is badly in need of significant renovation. Many of the systems in use are outdated and prone to breakage; thus, costs associated with the continued operation of the PdS dairy are eroding funding for research. An up to date, well maintained facility will allow the Center to make more effective use of critical research funds. We support immediate action from Under Secretary of REES for rapid implementation on Priority Group 5, within Table 5, pp. 36 of “The USDA Agricultural Research Service Capital Investment Strategy”, dated April 2012, which cites funding for a new dairy facility at PdS. We encourage ARS to use at least $46.2 million of $381 million that Congress appropriated for Building and Facilities in the FY19 Budget.

In addition to the financial challenges at the PdS dairy, current vacancies in leadership at the USDFRC including Center Director, Research Leader for the Dairy Forage Research Unit and Research Leader for the Cell Wall Biology and Utilization Research Unit are affecting the overall management of the Center and contributing to the challenges. These positions need to be filled as quickly as possible.

The US Dairy Forage Research Center is the primary location for ARS research in dairy and forage production. It has a demonstrated ability to do the needed research to help dairy and forage producers provide the public with high quality nutritious food in an efficient and sustainable manner. Again we call on you to provide the funding needed for the dairy facility at Prairie du Sac, WI and to fill the critical leadership positions at the center that are now vacant. This will allow the Center to continue to fulfill it’s vital mission for the country.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this critical need. Please contact me if you have any questions or need further information.

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