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The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition
and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Glen Thompson
Chair
House Committee on Agriculture
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Heinrich, Chair Harris, Chair Stabenow, and Chair Thompson:

The [Dairy Business Innovation Initiative](#) (DBII) is a necessary federal program that spurs regional strategies to enhance the capacity, vitality, and innovation of the American dairy industry. With a track record of success and staggering demand, we urge lawmakers to expand DBII investments in the annual appropriations process and the upcoming farm bill to \$36 million each year.

These initiatives convene farmers, industry partners, and academia to tackle production, processing, and marketing needs of the dairy industry specific to each initiative's coverage area. Administered by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), the Initiative provides resources to four regional initiatives that are headquartered in the states of Vermont, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and California. The regional initiatives then offer tailored grant opportunities, across dozens of states, to dairy businesses and other stakeholders.

DBII centers have offered, to date, \$165 million in grants to dairy farmers, processors, brands, cooperatives, non-profits, and academic partners. From small farmstead grants to processing equipment support for regional/national dairy processors, the DBIIs offer a range of awards for hundreds of projects. Project examples include new processing endeavors, new product and packaging developments, sustainability initiatives, and export exploration. All are fundamentally matching private resources with public funding to grow and modernize the dairy industry.

Additionally, we are encouraged that U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin and Marsha Blackburn, as well as U.S. House Representative Derrick Van Orden, introduced the [Dairy Business Innovation Act of 2023](#) and stand in support of this of this bipartisan, bicameral legislation.

The dairy industry is critical to our nation's food security and provides nutritious and accessible products to millions of families across the country. The dairy industry remains an economic engine

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for rural communities and the broader American economy, providing 3.2 million jobs and \$794 billion in overall economic impact¹.

An investment in the DBII is an investment in the future of U.S. dairy and **we ask congressional leaders to prioritize DBII funding at \$36 million annually in both the yearly appropriations cycle and within reauthorization of the farm bill.**

Sincerely,

CC: Ranking members and relevant committee members

¹ <https://www.idfa.org/dairydelivers>