

**Statement to the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board
Laura England, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
May 16, 2018**

Good morning. On behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Market Development, I am pleased to be here today to talk about the PA Preferred™ program and its impact on the marketing of Pennsylvania grown and produced products, including milk. I also will talk briefly about the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program (PDPP) regarding its work in dairy promotion and will provide an overview of an upcoming industry-wide promotional campaign focusing on the goodness of Pennsylvania-produced milk.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture launched the PA Preferred program in January 2004 to identify and promote food and agricultural products grown, produced or processed in Pennsylvania. In 2011, it became the statewide branding program for local food and farms through the PA Preferred Act. The program's members are licensees, meaning that they are licensed to use the PA Preferred registered logo.

More and more, consumers want to buy and consume local products, and the PA Preferred logo helps them identify the locally grown, harvested and processed products they want. When consumers buy local, they are helping to support Pennsylvania's more than 57,000 farms and the families who run them, including our state's 6,570 dairy farmers.

PA Preferred™ currently has more than 2,000 members, representing products from milk to mushrooms, pork to pickles, beef to beer, eggs to aquaculture, artisan cheese to farmstead ice cream, wool to alpaca fiber, and everything in-between. In addition to farms, members also include restaurants, retailers and food service operations that give priority to Pennsylvania-sourced products. The brand has gained momentum over the past five years, and we are proud that many consumers recognize the logo and understand what it means – the assurance that the ingredients in the products they buy are grown and processed in Pennsylvania.

Processors are also an important part of PA Preferred, and the program counts nearly 40 producers and dairy processors among its members. Members include larger processors such as Harrisburg Dairies, which purchases milk from multiple Pennsylvania dairy farmers, to family-owned businesses such as Oregon Dairy, which sources milk from its own cows. Dairy products produced by PA Preferred members include milk of all varieties and flavors, ice cream, butter, cheeses, and yogurt.

While many of our dairy members use the PA Preferred logo on their product labels, we would like to see that number increase. With growing consumer interest in purchasing local milk, now is an opportune time for PA Preferred dairy processors to feature the PA Preferred logo on their packaging and at retail, where possible.

To qualify for the PA Preferred program, dairies must meet the criteria included in the “Interim Guidelines for the Pennsylvania Preferred Trademark Licensure Program” with respect to fluid milk. The guidelines were issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture on May 19, 2012. *Pennsylvania-produced fluid milk* is fluid milk that is entirely produced within the Commonwealth. To feature the PA Preferred logo, the milk used in dairy processing for value added products must be entirely produced within Pennsylvania. The Interim Guidelines further state that “fluid milk marketed under the Pennsylvania Preferred® trademark shall not be co-mingled with fluid milk outside this Commonwealth.” An exception is provided for should there be a short-term, statewide shortage; however, the Department has not exercised this exception to date. A copy of the Interim Guidelines is included with this statement.

Why become a PA Preferred member? PA Preferred licensed members receive many benefits, including free use of the PA Preferred logo on all marketing, promotional and packaging materials. Their company and products are listed in the mapping database on the PA Preferred website, where other business owners and consumers can easily find them.

PA Preferred members become part of a well-connected network of businesses. We help connect manufacturers of processed products with distributors, retailers, chefs and food service professionals. Thanks to the program’s extensive network of resources and contacts, we also help processors source raw product and refer co-packing and private label opportunities.

Members also have access to seminars and classes at a variety of annual programs, including buyer vendor shows and trade shows, such as the Food Service Expo in Pittsburgh and the PA Preferred Marketplace at the annual Pennsylvania Farm Show.

And speaking of the Farm Show, the PA Preferred Culinary Connection promotes Pennsylvania grown and produced products through eight days of cooking demonstrations and educational activities. The dairy industry gets its own day, with special programming to promote the goodness of milk and dairy products.

We look forward to soon launching our revised PA Preferred website, which will include a new and improved search function, compelling photos and graphics, recipe ideas and much more – all designed to better connect consumers and businesses with PA Preferred products.

Another way in which the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture works to support the dairy industry is through the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program. Established in 1988, PDPP is part of the larger American Dairy Association North East (ADA North East), which develops local promotion programs throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. Working under the national dairy checkoff program, ADA North East represents nearly 12,000 dairy farm families in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New York, New Jersey and northern Virginia.

The PDPP board of directors is comprised of 19 Pennsylvania dairy farmers, who help oversee dairy farmers’ investment in the overall dairy checkoff program. The Pennsylvania Secretary of

Agriculture, or a designee, also serves on the board. Additionally, PDPP is represented on the ADA North East corporate board.

ADA North East develops and implements local programs to drive milk and dairy sales at retail outlets and in schools. Retail programs are focused on the dairy case, with marketing and merchandizing support to entice consumers to purchase milk. In schools, these efforts include breakfast programs, summer meals outreach and Fuel Up to Play 60. ADA North East also works with local food banks to provide milk for families in need. Other promotion efforts include consumer education about dairy through events, traditional and social media, and in collaboration with health professionals through National Dairy Council®. These programs help to build consumer confidence and trust in dairy foods and dairy farmers. And they encourage adults and children alike to choose milk as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Taking this theme a step further, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is collaborating with other partners in developing a statewide campaign to promote Pennsylvania milk. The “Choose PA Dairy: Goodness that Matters” campaign is focused on educating consumers about Pennsylvania’s dairy industry and encouraging them to choose Pennsylvania milk when shopping. A key component of the campaign will be a web-based, interactive map showing consumers where they can purchase Pennsylvania produced milk. PA Preferred dairies will be featured on the map, and Pennsylvania milk processors will be recognized through “plant code 42,” which shows consumers that the milk likely came from a Pennsylvania dairy farm.

Partners in the “Choose PA Dairy” campaign include the Center for Dairy Excellence, Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association, American Dairy Association North East, Professional Dairy Managers of PA, and Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

The campaign will kick off this Friday, May 18, 2018, with a press conference at the Martin’s store in Altoona. In addition to the interactive map, the campaign will be supported by traditional and social media, radio commercials, TV ads, billboard advertising and special events. The program’s messages focus on good nutrition, better health, stronger farm families and healthier communities. It’s a true collaborative effort, with each partner bringing expertise and resources to the table.

In closing, we recognize the importance of Pennsylvania’s dairy industry and stand ready to promote and support the commonwealth’s dairy farmers through our work and that of our industry partners. Choose PA Dairy – it’s goodness that matters for both farmers and consumers.