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## **Agribusiness and Feed Alliance calls for Trade Tariffs Resolution**

Albany, NY August 30th, 2018 – The Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance (NEAFA) joins with numerous other farmers and agribusiness associations to call for a speedy end to the tariffs & trade wars before irreparable damage is done. NEAFA would also like address the preliminary trade agreement that has been announced between the United States and Mexico.

“International trade, especially with Mexico and Canada, are critical for Northeast Agriculture,” said Andrew Dugan, President of NEAFA. “While it is heartening to hear of a preliminary agreement between the United States and Mexico, these discussions must be wrapped up in a timely manner. It will potentially take years for trade relationships to be re-established as market-shares continue to be lost and new opportunities missed during the current state of affairs. The longer it takes to reach an agreement, the more problematic it will be to restore favorable relationships and work towards a better future.”

According to the New York Farm Bureau, “a number of New York commodities, including dairy, soybeans, wine, maple and apples face retaliatory tariffs in several countries including China, Canada, Mexico and in the European Union. In turn, commodity prices have fallen on agricultural products. Equipment prices are rising due to the steel and aluminum tariffs, and farmers are concerned about losing long established markets as countries turn to other, cheaper sources for their food. These losses, in turn, will impact rural communities that depend on agriculture to support their local economies.”

Farmers and associations recently met at the Great New York State Fair to air their concerns together.

“Our farmers are reliable, they are resilient, and they are responsible. They are ingenuitive and

they are innovative in producing an excellent product for consumers both stateside and abroad amid a myriad of unpredictable challenges including the weather and ever-changing consumer demand. As steadfast patriots, we look to our government to recognize that our growers already operate in an environment of uncertainty and hope that this administration will facilitate opening the doorway to global opportunities in a way that is good for our country and its farmers,” said Colleen Klein, New York Corn and Soybean Growers Association’s Executive Director.

“Since the end of May, following Mexico’s announcement of 25% retaliatory tariffs on US cheeses, the price we receive for our milk has dropped by 14%. To put that into realistic terms for our dairy farm, that is a loss of over \$3,000 a day. Farm families like mine and our dairy farming friends across New York State are asking for a quick end to the trade war affecting our families’ livelihoods and our country’s backbone, the American farmer,” said Johanna Fox-Bossard, Barbland Dairy in Fabius, NY.

The National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA) and North American Export Grain Association (NAEGA) also weighed in on the subject with a joint statement regarding some of the positives and negatives of the preliminary agreement.

"The announcement of a preliminary trade agreement between the United States and Mexico represents a significant, positive step in modernizing and further enhancing North American food and agricultural commerce that benefits the economic growth and consumers in the hemisphere. We hope this agreement contributes to broader discussions on ways to further integrate food and agricultural markets between the United States, Mexico, and Canada to provide for increased investment, food security and consumer preference... We are disappointed by reports that the preliminary agreement removes or weakens key dispute-resolution procedures that currently benefit investors under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). These include provisions embodied in Chapters 19 and 20 of the NAFTA. These protections have been utilized successfully by U.S. agriculture to protect long-term investments in Mexico and defend against unjustified legal actions. These protections provide confidence to investors throughout the supply chain and protect industry efforts to create jobs and develop markets throughout North America.”

“While this preliminary agreement with Mexico is important, it is also necessary to recognize that talks must continue with Canada as well,” said Dugan. “An agreement between all three countries will be imperative so that trade in North America can prosper and grow through a mutually beneficial and overhauled open trade system. NEAFA will continue to monitor the situation, and welcomes the chance to provide a voice for agribusiness and feed producers in the

Northeast as agreements between all three trading partners evolve.”

\*\*\*The Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance is a 300 member organization committed to supporting a thriving northeast agricultural community through advocacy, education and collaboration. Members of the Alliance include feed, seed, fertilizer companies, financial service providers, transportation companies, veterinarians, nutritional services providers, and professional advisors.

**Kate Ziehm**

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