



Texas Association of Dairymen

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Kirsten Voinis, (512) 922-7141

TAD SUPPORTS LEGISLATION TO FUND PROPOSED DAIRY CENTER

Texas largest milk-producing state without dairy research/education facility

The Texas Association of Dairymen is support a bill to fund a dairy research and education center at Tarleton State University because it would both boost the dairy industry in Texas and help the industry better serve consumers. The bill – House Bill 1101 by Rep. Sid Miller, R-Stephenville – was heard for the first time Monday (Feb. 28) by the Texas House Committee on Higher Education, which left the bill pending.

The Texas Association of Dairymen (TAD) is among the supporters of the creation of the Southern Regional Dairy Center. Although Texas ranks 12th among milk-producing states, it is the largest of those states not to have a dedicated dairy research center, said John Cowan, executive director of TAD.

“The Texas dairy industry is a major contributor of fluid milk and milk products to consumers across the United States, yet our university-based dairy programs lag far behind other key states,” Cowan said. “Texas must strengthen its grassroots dairy education and research if it is to maintain its position as an industry leader and meet the growing needs of consumers.”

Cowan and David DeJong, a dairy producer in both Hamilton and Hartley counties, traveled to Austin Monday to testify in favor of HB 1101, which would authorize Tarleton State University to issue up to \$8 million in tuition revenue bonds to pay for the Tarleton State University Dairy Center.

“This bill is vitally important to the health of the dairy industry as a whole, especially as it relates to education and research,” said Rep. Miller. “Those two factors help enhance the economic vitality of the industry.”

Currently, Texas is losing federal research grants to other states because of its dilapidated or non existent facilities, said DeJong, first vice president of TAD. Yet dairy farmers must meet increasing demands in areas such as animal husbandry, waste management practices and production systems, he said.

Education and research in these and other areas conducted by the Southern Regional Center would help Texas dairies better serve consumers and remain profitable, he said.

“The research arm of this dairy center can not be stressed enough,” DeJong said. “Currently, most of the dairy research being conducted today is by private companies that are looking after themselves first and dairy farmers second. Unbiased, proven university research is what dairy farmers need.”

The center also would serve as a facility to train future dairy farmers as well as to educate all Texans, he said.

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The Texas Association of Dairymen (www.milk4texas.org) is a non-profit corporation comprised of dairy cooperatives whose members are individual milk producers in Texas.