



GEORGIA MILK PRODUCERS, INC.

1641 New High Shoals Road, Suite 5, Watkinsville, Georgia 30677

gamilkproducers@gmail.com; 1-706-310-0020

October 14, 2021

Whitney A. Rick
Director, Promotion, Research, and Planning Division
Dairy Program, AMS, USDA
1400 Independence Ave. SW,
Room 2958-S, Stop 0233,
Washington, DC 20250-0233

RE: Document No. AMS-DA-20-0060 - National Dairy Promotion and Research Board Reapportionment – Pages: 52420-52422

Georgia Milk Producers, Inc. a producer-funded, producer-focused non-profit organization, appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed amendment to modify the number of National Dairy Promotion and Research Board (Dairy Board) members in two of the 12 regions. While USDA states that the proposal will better reflect the geographic distribution of milk production in the U.S., our organization believes the proposed change would no longer provide the Southeast with proper representation on the Dairy Board. The recommendation to lower representation for the thirteen states in region 10 to just one (1) representative is concerning.

For over the last two decades, extremely volatile market conditions have taken a toll on the Southeast dairy industry. According to USDA the Southeast States (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia) had 1,650 licensed dairy farms at the end of 2020, compared to 3,260 in 2010, a loss of 1,610 dairy farms. If the current rate of decline continues, there will be less than 1,000 Southeast dairy farms in another 10 years or less.

Despite the loss of dairy farms in the Southeast, population growth in the region continues to explode. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the South leads the way with 10 of the top 15 fastest-growing large U.S. cities, with a population of 50,000 or more. When looking at the geographic comparison of milk marketings versus population, or "cows versus people," the "locality" of milk supply compared to dairy product demand provides a different perspective. While the Southeast may not have as many dairy cows as compared to other regions in the U.S., it has a large amount of people that consume dairy, and that market will continue to grow. Therefore, USDA should consider the population of each region in addition to milk production when determining representation on the Dairy Board.

Our producers also have a vast knowledge and understanding of how milk promotion and marketing dollars should be spent in our region on fluid milk promotion. We take pride in the essential nutrition that our product provides school children and working families across the Southeast at an affordable cost. Fluid milk production is strong in Georgia and representation from our region should stay strong on the Dairy Board as well.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our concerns. Any effort made to postpone the proposed change and allow the current Dairy Board to further analyze the amendment will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Farrah Newberry
Executive Director
Georgia Milk Producers, Inc.