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**DAISY THE COW GOES TO HARTFORD**

**Joined By Legislators and Attorney General to Urge Support for State Dairy Farmers**

**Hartford, Connecticut, March 12, 2009** – Daisy the dairy cow, flanked by state officials and farmers, pleaded with legislators today at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford to take action to save the dairy industry in Connecticut. Dairy farmers are currently losing nearly 90 cents on every gallon of milk they sell to wholesalers due to a combination of high costs of production and a historically low federally mandated milk price that they receive.

“I really love it here in Connecticut and don’t want to move out of state. When I found out how little my farmer was making on my milk, I became concerned that my farm would soon run out of money and I’d be out of a home,” said Daisy through a statement read by her farmer Melissa Greenbacker of Durham. “I understand this is a tough budget year, but recent studies have shown that the dairy industry contributes over \$1.1 billion to our state’s economy and employs over 4,000 people. Something has to be done.”

One proposal is being put forth by Representative Bryan Hurlburt, (D-Tolland). “The cost of milk to consumers is at an all-time high, yet the dairy farmer at the source is losing money on the sale of every gallon of milk,” says Representative Hurlburt. “My bill would increase the fees charged milk retailers with the proceeds being sent back to the



farmers. With some major supermarket retailers making a nearly \$2 per gallon mark-up on a gallon of milk, I’m sure will be able to offset the increased annual fee without affecting the price to the consumer.”



Attorney General Richard Blumenthal agreed saying something must be done. "Something is desperately wrong with the milk market picture: Milk consumers are paying vastly more, but dairy farmers are receiving significantly less. Connecticut faces a critical choice -- join other states to pressure Congress

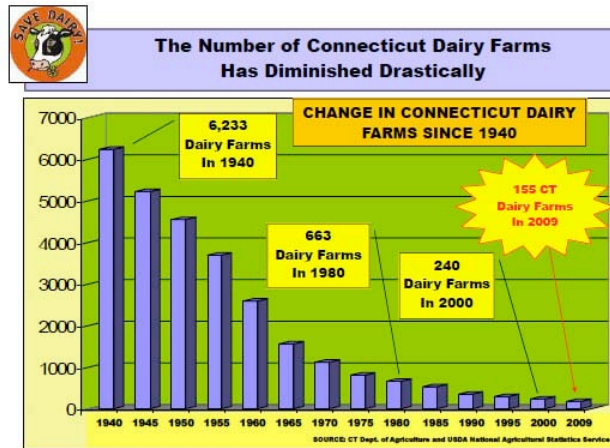
to reinstate the Northeast Dairy Compact or adopt a state law to reduce retail price gouging while providing financial assistance to dairy farmers," Blumenthal added. "Action is vital to preserve dairy farming -- a key Connecticut industry. High milk prices make it less affordable, especially to the poor -- and also mean higher costs for taxpayer-supported programs that subsidize milk and other healthy food purchases."

"Dairy farms play a very important role in our state's economy and we threaten to lose a significant amount of revenue should we transmit milk from other states, which is proven to be very costly," said State Senaor Tony Guglielmo (R-Stafford). "We have the ability to provide our dairy farmers with a break they well deserve by providing assistance to this industry when times are at their very worst. We have seen a significant decline in the number of dairy farms in Connecticut and without action we risk losing more of these farms, many of which have been around for generations."

"Connecticut's dairy industry is a bedrock of our economy. These farmers here today and their brethren -- not to mention Daisy and her's -- are responsible for over a billion dollars of economic activity in Connecticut each year, as well as thousands of jobs throughout the state," says Senate President Donald E. Williams, Jr. (D-Brooklyn) "Particularly in these difficult economic times, this is a home grown industry that we simply cannot afford to lose. For the past several years, the legislature and the Rell administration have worked together to support our dairy farmers. We have allocated millions of dollars of economic support, and produced the report that shows the irreplaceable economic value of the industry. There

is no question putting local milk on our kitchen tables is good for the economy and good for our families. It is important that Connecticut's dairy farms don't get plowed over by global economic forces that are beyond their control. I ask the Governor to continue working with us, legislators from both chambers and parties, to help craft a solution."

That thought was echoed by Lucy Nolan, Executive Director of End Hunger Connecticut!. "Kids get milk at school, through coupons for WIC - drink your milk is part of our mantra as parents. We need to ensure that our children, pregnant women, our schools have milk and dairy products to keep them strong and healthy. It must be affordable and available," she says.



"Best estimates say Connecticut has a 2-3 day supply of food in case of an emergency - our farms, our dairy farmers, and Daisy, may be all we have to keep disaster at bay."

Daisy concluded that she hopes this year is the year action is taken to save the dairy industry in Connecticut. "Dairy farms preserve open space and help limit unwanted sprawl. They allow residents to have a local and fresh source of milk and provide homes to a whole host of wildlife," says Daisy. "My bags are packed and I'll leave Connecticut if I have to, but I'm hoping the legislature takes action this session to create a safety net for farmers so we can save an industry that has significant impact on our state's economy."

For more information on the campaign to save the dairy industry in Connecticut visit [www.ctmilk.org](http://www.ctmilk.org).

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