Secretary Brooke L. Rollins

Washington, D.C. 20250

September 17, 2026

Lolly Lesher
National Dairy Board Chair
94 Lesher Road
Bernville, PA 19506

Dear Ms. Lesher:

The Administration is committed to ensuring the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) fulfills its core mission to serve American farmers. By promoting agricultural production, overseeing nutrition programs, fostering rural development, and protecting our natural resources, we strive to guarantee the American people enjoy the safest, most affordable, and abundant food supply in the world. The Dairy Production Stabilization Act of 1983 (7 U.S.C. § 4501 *et seq.*) established the Dairy Promotion and Research Program (dairy checkoff) fulfilling this mission through assessments and activities used exclusively to advance dairy promotion and research for the benefit of dairy farmers, importers, and consumers.

USDA is advancing this Administration's economic and environmental goals by aligning checkoff programs with its policy positions. The policy of USDA – first and foremost – is to promote American agriculture. Effective immediately, all projects funded by the dairy checkoff program must focus on long-term value creation for future generations and not activities advancing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks, net-zero, or climate-neutrality initiatives.

Although this is not an exhaustive list, upon review, USDA considers the following DMI initiatives as supporting ESG activities: the mandatory participation in Scope 3 GHG accounting by dairy producers; U.S. Dairy Materiality Assessment; U.S. Dairy Net Zero Initiative; Pathways to Dairy Net Zero; Greener Cattle Initiative; Sustainability Alliance; U.S. Dairy Stewardship Commitment; the mandatory participation in the Farmers Assuring Responsible Management Environmental Stewardship by dairy producers, and 2050 environmental stewardship goals insofar as it relates to ESG commitments, greenhouse-gas intensity reduction campaigns, and any solicitation of ESG commitments. Other initiatives may also be misaligned with departmental policy.

To ensure policy alignment, please submit a detailed listing of all projects (current and planned) supporting ESG activities, including but not limited to those listed above. The submission should include any contract termination limitations and a proposed plan for termination and be sent to

AMSDairycomments@usda.gov by September 30, 2026. USDA will work with you to determine which activities need to be terminated to align with the current policy of the Department. For those activities that are ultimately terminated, the dairy checkoff must cease all funding and work associated with these activities. All work and creation of materials associated with these activities – including research, media, social media, websites, and any meetings where work supporting ESG activities would be a topic – will be required to cease. This action applies to DMI and its affiliated and funded entities, including but not limited to: the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, U.S. Dairy Export Council, Dairy Research Institute, Global Dairy Platform, Newtrient, National Dairy Council and all State, Regional and Importer Qualified Programs.

Please direct all questions regarding compliance to AMSDairycomments@usda.gov.

USDA remains committed to its support for American farmers, importers, and consumers.

Sincerely,

Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Similar letter sent to Barbara O'Brien, DMI, Chief Executive Officer

cc: National Dairy Board members
Marilyn Hershey, DMI Chairwomen
Charles Krause, UDIA Chairman
State, Regional and Importer Qualified Programs