

# MILKLINE

NEWSLETTER

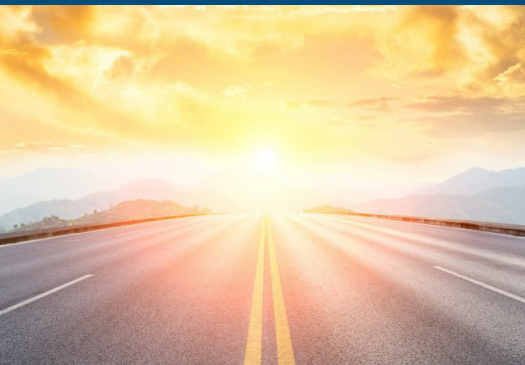


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## A Vision for 2020



It finally happened. 2019 came to a close. What a year! I don't know a person in agriculture that isn't ready to put that year to rest and move on to 2020.

I've talked more about the weather this past year than I care to think about. And milk prices? Let's just say I am eternally grateful that they are rebounding after five years. I am hopeful that 2020 will be a better year for our dairy farmers in many ways.

Looking back on 2019 in terms of regulatory and legislative issues, it's been quite a year. FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative has been garnering support for the USMCA, advocating for changes in the Dairy Margin Coverage Program, and working on getting more milk options into schools among many other issues. Our advocacy efforts got FarmFirst invited to visit with Vice-President Mike

Pence during his visit last spring in Eau Claire, Wis. Our own board member, Wayne Gajewski, was able to speak on behalf of dairy farmers in a roundtable discussion to give first-hand testimony on how much trade means to the dairy industry and how much dairy supports the economy in a state like Wisconsin. Our work is not at all complete on these issues, as we continue to speak up for members like you.

Being a leader today means also building the leaders of the future. FarmFirst has always been dedicated to supporting the next generation, and our scholarship program is a testament to that. More than \$145,000 has been awarded to 165 students since 2013. In fact, our 2020 scholarship program is once again accepting applications, which are due by March 31st. Additionally, our Young Cooperator program connects young farmers of the cooperative with other members and resources to build their own skills and knowledge as a farmer.

This year, FarmFirst has launched 'FarmFirst Future Dairy Leaders', a program designed to focus on building the cooperative and industry knowledge for a select group of members throughout four day-long sessions while also taking a deeper dive at their own leadership aspirations. Getting to know this first class of participants reminds me of the passion that dairy farmers have for this industry they love and care so much about. Look for great things to come from these members in the future.

As a member of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, you have a lot to look forward to in 2020. I hope you feel the same excitement and joy that I do for the year ahead. 🐄

*Article by Julie Sweney,  
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative*

## Official Notice: FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Member Meeting

Notice is hereby given, by the President and Secretary of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, a regional cooperative with headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin (the "Cooperative"), pursuant to the Cooperative's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws and proper actions of the Board of Directors of the Cooperative (the "Board"), that the regular Annual Delegate Member Meeting of the Cooperative will convene at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, February 14, 2020 at the Premier Best Western Hotel & Convention Center, 1 N. Main Street, Oshkosh, Wis. for and in consideration of action upon any and all matters which may lawfully come before said meeting.

Said meeting will continue until the disposition of all proper business. Dated this 15th day of January, 2020, by: John Rettler, President. 🐄

Dedicated to serving and representing you, our family farm members, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative represents farms in Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana through policy advocacy, dairy marketing services, laboratory testing opportunities and industry promotion.



CONTACT INFORMATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: John Rettler  
Neosho, Wis. 920-625-3237

Vice-President: Brian Wozniak  
Stanley, Wis. 715-703-0361

Secretary: Kathy Bauer  
Faribault, Minn. 507-332-2870

Treasurer: Richard Meyer  
Unity, Wis. 715-223-2058

Young Cooperator Rep: Travis Clark  
Eldorado, Wis. 608-516-8789

Steve Brock - Daggett, Mich. 906-290-1917

Bob Dietzel - East Dubuque, Ill. 563-543-2368

Wayne Gajewski - Athens, Wis. 715-370-5078

Jean Reisinger - Spring Green, Wis. 608-546-6162

Dan Vandertie - Brussels, Wis. 920-493-7564

MEMBER SERVICES FIELD STAFF

Bob Hodgson - Dyersville, Iowa. 608-642-2859

Betty Lund - Mondovi, Wis. 715-491-9119

Dan Schaefer - Platteville, Wis. 608-330-1741

Rick Wolfe - Aniwa, Wis. 715-581-4321

Pat Yeagle - Winslow, Ill. 815-291-4581

Dan Zeleske - Fond du Lac, Wis. 920-323-7079

MILK MARKETING FIELD STAFF

Jeff Bradley - Columbus, Wis. 608-516-3624

Deanna Malin - Clintonville, Wis. 920-901-2173

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 14380  
Madison, WI 53708-0380

MADISON OFFICE

4001 Nakoosa Trail, Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53714  
(608) 244-3373

Attend FarmFirst's Producer Discovery Workshops on Friday, Feb. 14 in Oshkosh



FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is 'Leading with Purpose' as members and delegates are set to gather for the 2020 Annual Meeting on February 14-15, 2020

at the Premier Best Western Hotel & Convention Center in Oshkosh, Wis. From our workshop series to the resolutions being voted upon, dairy farmers together can gain some fresh perspective on the year ahead, the work FarmFirst is doing for members and what innovative dairy products the industry is developing.

The cooperative's annual event kicks off with it's Producer Discovery Workshops on Friday afternoon, which are open to all dairy farmers regardless of cooperative membership.

This year's Producer Discovery Workshops feature:

**1:15 p.m. The Impact of Dairy Policy in 2020**  
Mark Stephenson, Director of Dairy Policy Analysis, UW-Madison

After it's first year of implementation, the Dairy Margin Coverage program proved to be profitable for participants in 2019. Dr. Stephenson will explore legislative, regulatory and trade issues and their potential impact on milk prices into 2020 and beyond.

**2:45 p.m. Dairy Evolutions & Revolutions**  
Katie Burgess, Commodity Risk Analyst, Blimling & Associates

Simply put, consumers are evolving. From the way they shop to what they're shopping for, and dairy has felt the impact. Learn what advances in technology and evolving consumer preferences have created a new upheaval - with online groceries, dynamic discounters and tricked out convenient stores.

Be sure to take advantage of these great educational opportunities! There is no cost to attend the workshops; however, to ensure seating space, please contact us at 608-286-1909 to reserve your spot.

Youth Corner  
2020 Scholarship Applications Available

Scholarship applications are available once again for the 2020 FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative scholarship program. The application deadline is **March 31, 2020**. Please review the application for student eligibility and criteria. Applications are available online at [www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com](http://www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com) or by calling 608-286-1909.



**Use the online application for an easy and quick submission process!** Applicants can once again submit their application directly online via our online submission form. Visit [www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com/scholarships](http://www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com/scholarships) to access the form. Please confirm receipt of your application.

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## FarmFirst Applauds USMCA Passage




FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative applauds the landslide passage of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) trade agreement on January 16 with the ending vote of 89 to 10.

Jeff Lyon, general manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. “In addition to reforming Canada’s controversial dairy pricing system, the USMCA also establishes new protections for products that rely on common cheese names, such as parmesan and feta.”

“There is still work to be done. We are grateful for the hard-fought details that are part of this agreement, however, we would be remiss to not monitor implementation of this agreement to ensure it is being enforced in full and that U.S. dairy is reaping the full benefits,” says Lyon.

“USMCA makes important strides to break down trade barriers, opening the door to new opportunities and supporting the flow of high-quality American dairy products to two valuable export markets,” said Tom Vilsack, president and CEO of USDEC. “The strong enforcement measures included in the final agreement give officials the tools necessary to hold our trade partners accountable and ensure the gains secured by USMCA are completely realized. We are grateful to the Administration for the sizable accomplishments secured in USMCA on dairy. With this trade deal complete, negotiators can now turn their attention to other key markets around the world in order to gain further ground for U.S. dairy.”

U.S. dairy exports are projected to increase by more than \$314 million a year, according to the International Trade Commission. 

“Today’s resulting vote in the Senate showcases a strong bipartisan support for this modern trade agreement and ultimately strong support to get U.S. dairy products to be exported to our neighbors to the north and south,” says John Rettler, dairy farmer from Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. “Getting to this point with USMCA has been no small feat. We extend our appreciation to our U.S. Trade Ambassadors and congressional leaders who have made this a priority. Our members are looking forward to the benefits that will be reaped once the trade agreement is fully implemented.”

“This new trade agreement addresses the class 6 and 7 pricing distortion issues and expands market access for U.S. dairy into Canada while also affirming our strong trade relationship with Mexico. Mexico is our top dairy export country, and this trade agreement allows for that relationship to continue to flourish,” says

## Phase 1 China Deal is Progress; Still Work To Be Done

The signing of the Phase One trade agreement with China makes important advances on nontariff issues harming U.S. dairy trade. While promises of additional Chinese purchases of U.S. agricultural products in the next two years are encouraging, the benefits for the dairy industry remain unclear. Given that China’s retaliatory tariffs remain a significant impediment to U.S. dairy sales in China, the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) and National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) stress that work with China is not complete until the retaliatory tariffs against all U.S. dairy exports are fully lifted.

The Phase One deal with China makes progress on nontariff barriers important to U.S. dairy, such as:

- Tackling facility and product registration steps that have stymied firms seeking to export to China for several years;
- Improving the regulatory pathway for exports of infant formula and fluid milk (including extended shelf life milk) to China;
- Creating new transparency and due process obligations regarding geographical indications and common food names;
- Promises of increased purchases of U.S. agricultural goods, including dairy.

Left to be fully resolved is how China will fulfill its commitment to

purchase large quantities of U.S. agriculture products, including dairy.

“Trade agreements that prove to be valuable to the U.S. dairy industry continues to be a priority for the cooperative,” says Jeff Lyon, FarmFirst General Manager. “We are hopeful that the signed Phase One trade agreement will lead to a roll-back of the retaliatory tariffs and that our quality U.S. dairy exports can begin to make their way to China without barriers. We will remain vigilant on the agreement as it is implemented.”



China remains a valuable export market for U.S. dairy products, despite retaliatory tariffs. Over the 12-month period spanning December 2018 – November 2019, U.S. dairy exports to China totaled \$377 million in sales. However, retaliatory tariffs on U.S. dairy products have steeply disadvantaged the U.S. industry compared to its competitors and contributed to 47 percent decline in U.S. exports to China over that same period, harming U.S. farmers, manufacturers and exporters. 

## Delegates & Alternates Elected for 8th Annual Meeting

All members had an opportunity to nominate, and then vote for fellow members to serve as delegates or alternates to the upcoming 8th Annual Meeting of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative being held on February 14-15. These individuals will participate in several educational sessions, review resolutions and any proposed bylaws, and provide feedback and direction during the meeting. For a full listing of district areas, please visit [www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com](http://www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com) and click on Member Meetings under the Member Services tab. The following members were elected in their respective districts:

**District 1:** *Henry Granskog, Bob Hanchek, Kevin Hoewisch, Dave Johnson, Bruce Long, Charlie Meintz, Scott Mellgren, David Wagner*

**District 2:** *Russell Braun, T.J. Haelfrisch, Eugene Hansen, Andy Meyer, Jim Smidel*

**District 3:** *Loron Bock, Travis Clark, Ronald Griebenow, Lee Klumpers, Peter Martin, Mike Paulus, Tony Schmitz, Earl Van Ruiswijk, Nathan Wiese*

**District 4:** *Tom Bunkelman, Travis Dehnel, David Hannemann, James Juedes, Keith Kreager, Jeff Osborn, Steve Roets, Julie Stowe*

**District 5:** *Tom Bauer, Will Beitlich, Michael Brooks, Lawrence Durst, Jackie Hoffman, Stephanie Hughes, Sharon Laubscher, Peter Mallek, Peggy Pankratz, John Salzman, Abby Swan, Mike Yager*

**District 6:** *Mark Decker, Brian Dinderman, Doug Droessler, Jerry Hammerand, Mike Kempfer, Terry Kieler, Pat Leonard, Glen Meier, Beau Rindy, Kurt Schmitt, Becky Wellnitz*

**District 7:** *Donald Bangart, Paul Fischer, Dean Hoesly, Holly Lindner, Mitch Malm, Allen Mayer, Randy Meyer, Michelle Popp, Dean Schmelzer, Tom Shafto*

**District 8:** *Doug Danielson, Dan Holub, Gary Kohn, Mary Muska, George Polzin, Donald Schesel*

**District 9:** *Allen Blommel, Riley Boadwine, Anne Borgschatz, Joe Bragger, Bernard Manderfeld, Larry Mellgren, Joe Ritter, Richard Rosen, Keith Welgraven*

## Director and D&R Election Results



During our fall member elections, several districts were open for a seat as a Director on the Board and as a member of the Districting & Resolutions Committee. Below are those individuals that were elected in their districts:

### Board of Directors:

- District 6 - Bob Dietzel
- District 7 - Rich Meyer
- District 8 - Brian Wozniak

### D&R Committee:

- District 1 - Dave Johnson
- District 3 - Ronald Griebenow
- District 4 - David Hannemann
- District 5 - Peter Mallek
- District 7 - Allen Mayer
- District 9 - Allen Blommel

## Senate Seeking Ag Labor Action



The House of Representatives received praise from national dairy organizations when it passed the bipartisan Farm Workforce Modernization Act (H.R. 5038) on December 11, 2019

before adjourning for the year. The bill includes critical provisions to address dairy's unique workforce needs and represents the first House-passed agricultural labor reform measure in more than three decades.

As the new year begins on Capitol Hill, the groundwork is being laid for ag labor reform and key leaders on this process have been identified. Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina will be leading this process for the Republicans, while Senator Dianne Feinstein of California will be taking the lead for the Democrats. According to National Milk Producers Federation sources, it is anticipated that the Senate will draft its own bill, but the measure will broadly address the same elements as the House's passed bill. While timing is always uncertain, NMPF expects this work to occur rapidly, before the presidential election process completely eclipses the congressional calendar, with the aspiration of introducing a bipartisan bill in March. 🇺🇸

## Member Appreciation Breakfast During Central Plains Dairy Expo



FarmFirst members are invited to attend a member

appreciation breakfast taking place on Thursday, March 26 at the Crooked Pint Ale House (located within the Holiday Inn) at 2040 W. Russell Street, Sioux Falls, SD.

Members are welcome to enjoy a warm, delicious breakfast being served from 7:00 a.m. until 8:15 a.m. while visiting with General Manager Jeff Lyon. No formal presentation is included, however Jeff and Field Representative Betty Lund will be present to visit with members about membership opportunities, disaster programs, and hear first-hand of their outlook for 2020.

Members in attendance will also receive a special FarmFirst item. Make your reservations today! Reservations allow for a more accurate meal count. Call Betty at 715-491-9119 today! 🍷

## Testifying in Favor of Retaliatory Cheese Tariffs



As the U.S. government considers imposing tariffs on French exports in retaliation for a new French tax on U.S. internet companies, the National Milk Producers Federation in early January said the

target should be French cheeses that unfairly benefit from the lopsided imbalance in trade between the nations. At issue is the U.S. proposal to target \$2.4 billion of French goods in reaction to the new 3 percent tax France has imposed on revenue from companies including Google, Amazon and Facebook.

Peter Vitaliano, NMPF Vice President for Economic Policy & Market Research, testifying at a U.S. Trade Representative's hearing, pointed out that EU policies "have resulted in a deeply unbalanced trade deficit. The U.S. imported approximately \$261 million of French dairy products in 2018 while France only imported a meager \$4 million in U.S. dairy products." Vitaliano urged the USTR to specifically target French cheeses that benefit from unreasonable geographical indications protections. 🍷

## Homb Represents Cooperative on Wisconsin Dairy Rules Advisory Committee, Testifies Regarding ATCP 83 Rule

### Serving on Dairy Rules Advisory Committee

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative was asked by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to have a representative on the Wisconsin Dairy Rules Advisory Committee. Mick Homb, Director of Milk Marketing for Family Dairies USA, a division of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, is representing the cooperative.

The purpose of the newly formed committee is to advise DATCP on changes to improve dairy rules for farmers and processors in Wisconsin while maintaining consumer trust, food safety and the quality of Wisconsin dairy products.

"It's important to review policies and rules that are in place to ensure the best practices continue to be reflected in the state's safety protocols," says Jeff Lyon, FarmFirst General Manager. "Mick's extensive experience working in dairy processing facilities and now with our Family Dairies patrons will make him a valuable committee member as he provides insight and perspective. We look forward to the positive difference this committee will make for dairy farmers and processors."

The committee's first meeting in early November focused on establishing key issues and top priorities.

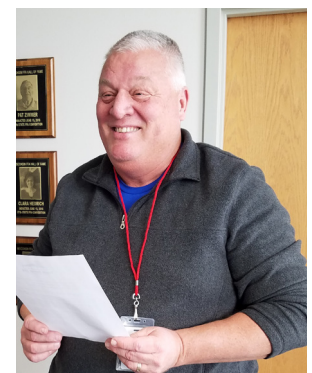
Members of the committee include dairy farmers, milk haulers, processors, engineers and inspectors for thorough representation of the industry's supply chain.

### Testifying on ATCP 83 Rule

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative and Family Dairies USA presented comments to DATCP on December 17 during the public comment period held regarding a proposed rule change regarding the annual renewal of rBST-free affidavits. The rule change would remove the annual renewal requirement of rBST-free affidavits.

Family Dairies USA Milk Marketing Director Mick Homb's comments focused on saving time and money for farmers, cooperative field staff and DATCP staff by eliminating the need for annually-renewed rBST-free affidavits.

"It's most important to keep in mind all that is being required of dairy farmers today. While it might seem like a simple signature on an affidavit, it requires an appointment to be made with dairy farmers when they otherwise could be tending to other work needing their attention on the farm," Homb said. "Overall, no one is feeling the pressures of the market greater than our dairy farmers. For DATCP to recognize that dairy farmers as well as our cooperative staff's time and energy is better spent on producing high quality milk showcases a commonsense approach to an issue that no longer requires the attention it once demanded." 🍷



*Mick Homb testifies on ATCP 83 on Dec. 17.*

# NOVEMBER 2019

	UPPER MIDWEST	CENTRAL	MIDEAST
Order Name and Number	Order 30	Order 32	Order 33
Producer Milk (lbs.)	1,617,068,827	851,825,990	1,323,169,413
Producer Price Differential @ base zone	\$ -0.94	\$ -3.00	\$ -2.44
Statistical Uniform Price/cwt @ 3.5% BF*	\$ 19.51	\$ 17.45	\$ 18.01
Class I Price/cwt	\$ 19.94	\$ 20.14	\$ 20.14
Class II Price/cwt	\$ 16.85	\$ 16.85	\$ 16.85
Class III Price/cwt	\$ 20.45	\$ 20.45	\$ 20.45
Class IV Price/cwt	\$ 16.60	\$ 16.60	\$ 16.60
<b>Component Prices &amp; Test Avg. % aves</b>			
Butterfat/lb.	\$ 2.3195	4.08%	4.11%
Protein/lb.	\$ 3.9118	3.25%	3.34%
Other Solids/lb.	\$ 0.11120	5.74%	5.76%
SCC Adjust Rate/1000	\$ 0.00109		
<b>Producer Milk Classified %</b>			
Class I	14.50%	42.39%	39.90%
Class II	9.80%	13.65%	21.00%
Class III	68.50%	13.54%	18.80%
Class IV	7.20%	30.42%	20.30%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



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Plan to attend our 2020  
Producer Discovery Workshops -  
More Inside!

## Welcome New Members

We would like to welcome these individuals and farms that have joined FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative recently.

We look forward to your participation and involvement in the programs and services of your cooperative where we put members first.

Brian & Michelle Niemuth      Michael & Janet Wittmann

David Gluidt

Don & Dana Antal

Douglas Breyer

Terry & Jill Knipper

Duane & Buettner

Earl & Lynelle Oberholtzer

Matt Ekovich

Four Cubs Farm

Cleason Burkholder

Victor Michel

Timothy Weihert

Aaron Moeller

Kris Garbrecht

Bill Henke



## Sign up for the FarmFirst E-Newsletter!

Don't miss out on receiving industry news and cooperative updates! Submit your email by calling 608-286-1909 or emailing [info@farmfirstcoop.com](mailto:info@farmfirstcoop.com).