

MILKLINE

NEWSLETTER

FARM FIRST
DAIRY COOPERATIVE

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Consumers Flock to the Gold Standard During Pandemic



One of the most interesting things I have observed during this pandemic is how so many consumers returned to the basics. Their decision was not always a personal choice or desire, but perhaps out of necessity. Take bread, for example. Not only were shelves cleared out during the panic buying that ensued when states issued stay at home orders which caused the shuttering of restaurants and other businesses, but flour and yeast disappeared as well. For some, they had to make bread if they wanted any. For others, it was a chance to try something new (yes, I am referring to baking in general). For others, it was a return to doing something they enjoyed because they had more time to spend in the kitchen.

Baking bread wasn't the only baking going on. Butter experienced explosive

growth, particularly unsalted butter which for some grocery retail chains resulted in purchase increases of 300% in this last quarter due to the pandemic.

A similar situation happened with fluid milk.

As we know, fluid milk was quickly taken from its refrigerated shelves and hurried home to households during this same panic-buying period. What is interesting to note, however, is that so many

“This is a grand opportunity for dairy to remain engaged with consumers to continue establishing these purchasing habits...”

consumers quickly purchased real milk compared to its plant-based imitator counterparts during this time of need.

Both dairy and plant-based beverages saw a dramatic increase in retail purchases this past March due to the panic-buying that ensued (see the chart on page 4). Yes, plant-based beverages saw an increase of 7.9 million more gallons purchased between March 9-March 22 than the same time last year. What is truly more incredible is that the demand for real fluid milk exploded by more than 45 million gallons - on top of fluid milk that is regularly purchased.

On a typical day, milk outsells plant-based beverages by a margin more than 10 to 1. So, it makes sense dairy continued to out-sell its plant-based counterparts during the panic-buying.

This increased demand during this peak retail sales period for 2020 is important to me for two reasons. First, clearly there is a significant and strong demand for fluid milk. There is no question about that. Regardless of the increased consumption of plant-based beverages it still walks in the shadow of real dairy milk because of its inferior nutritional qualities and taste profile compared to real milk. It's easy to consider milk the gold standard, of sorts.

While the increased demand for fluid milk and other dairy products is great news, there is certainly room for growth, and it begins in the kitchen. So many consumers rediscovered the magic of cooking at home during the pandemic, and now, many of these individuals are tired of being in the kitchen. It has become burdensome and unexciting. However, some things have not changed - people need to eat, people need healthy, tasty and wholesome food, and - the pandemic is simply not over. This is a grand opportunity for dairy to remain engaged with consumers to continue establishing these purchasing habits, by sharing new recipes, new ways to mix up a traditional dish, and new ways to enjoy dairy.

Secondly, it lifted the confidence level and proved to dairy farmers across the

Continued on Page 4...

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.

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National Dairy Shrine to Honor the Late Randy Geiger with Pioneer Award



Randy Geiger, a longtime cooperative leader and highly regarded dairyman, has been recognized by the National Dairy Shrine as one of four Pioneer Award honorees for 2020.

A lifelong dairyman, Randy Geiger's love for farming began while growing up on his family's Wisconsin dairy farm. Following his father's untimely death in 1966, Randy began a 50-year career in dairy farming when he and his wife Rosalie established their own Ran-Rose Dairy Farms. Together they bred and developed an outstanding herd of Registered Holsteins recognized for its production and high quality of milk.

Geiger was a dedicated and committed volunteer throughout his life. He served on dozens of community, state and national committees and boards. He became a visible and effective voice in lobbying elected officials at all levels of government on behalf of dairy farmers and rural residents. As a dairy leader, he was instrumental in positively shaping the dairy business environment. In 1989 when the Kasson Cheese plant at Brillion, Wisconsin, went into bankruptcy and dairy farmers were not paid for their milk, Geiger worked tirelessly to make changes in the Wisconsin Producer Security law to minimize the chances of farmers not getting paid in the future for their milk. He later was asked to give guidance to the Wisconsin Dairy 2020 Task Force following an appointment by the governor.

Geiger was president of the Manitowoc Milk Producers Cooperative for 16 years (1998 to 2013). From 2011-12, he became the "bridge builder" and driving force behind the formation of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative which brought together three of Wisconsin's leading dairy cooperatives - Manitowoc Milk Producers Cooperative, Family Dairies USA and Milwaukee Cooperative Milk Producers - into one powerful entity in 2013. As Jeff Lyon, current FarmFirst General Manager says, "Randy saw the duplication of programs and services by our three predecessor cooperatives, and he recognized that if the three cooperatives were to remain relevant and continue to meet the needs of dairy farmers, a merger was needed to improve efficiencies, programs and services." Today FarmFirst represents 3,400 Upper Midwest dairy farmers producing nearly 10 billion pounds of milk. Geiger was also very instrumental in creating educational scholarships for farm youth when Manitowoc Milk Producers received a monetary bequest from radio personality Bill Walters. As a result of Geiger's efforts, FarmFirst has awarded more than \$145,000 in scholarships to 165 students.

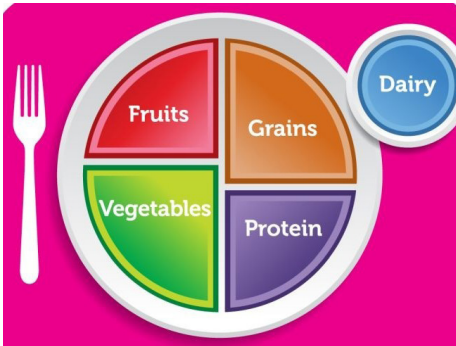
Geiger was a highly effective participant in national public policy discussions affecting dairy producers through his service on the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) Board of Directors from 2008-13 where he also helped guide its Environmental and Milk Marketing Committees. In 2003, he was part of the group of dairy producers who oversaw the formation of the Cooperatives Working Together program, a self-help program aimed at improving dairy farm income. As Jim Mulhern, NMPF President and CEO, states, "In his many local, state and national roles, Randy was a passionate voice for farmers, and a great advocate for their needs."

Geiger died on September 9, 2019. He will join a distinguished group of industry leaders whose stories and portraits are featured in the National Dairy Hall of Fame at the National Dairy Shrine Museum in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. To view the full release, please visit www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com.

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Dietary Guidelines Reaffirm Dairy's Role but Wider Review Needed



The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's (DGAC) final report was released on July 15. While the final report reaffirmed dairy's crucial role in a nutritious diet, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative believes it falls short of fully

representing the role dairy fats play in a healthy diet. The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) expressed concern as well that the committee failed to recognize the newer, broader science that shows the benefits of dairy foods on all fat levels.

"The latest report from the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee confirms what so many consumers know and understand about dairy - that it is a wholesome, nutritious beverage that is important at all stages of life. Science continues to support dairy being a part of a healthy, balanced diet," says Jeff Lyon, FarmFirst General Manager.

Unfortunately, it was disappointing that the committee largely reflected long-held assumptions on saturated fat, despite numerous studies that have called traditional anti-fat guidance into question.

"We repeatedly called on the committee to take a fresh look at multiple studies that show beneficial or neutral effects of dairy on chronic disease risk at all fat levels," said Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF, the largest organization of U.S. dairy farmers and the cooperatives they own. "Unfortunately, the DGAC report does not reflect this newer science."

NMPF sent a joint letter with IDFA to the secretaries of USDA and HHS, as well as the chair of the DGAC, ahead of the release of the report, to reiterate our strong view, as explained more fully in previous comments to the DGAC, that a body of science in recent years has found that dairy foods, regardless of fat level, appear to have either neutral or beneficial effects on chronic disease risks. The NMPF-IDFA joint message called on the committee "to complete its review by including all relevant scientific studies that

bear on these questions and, if the findings so indicate, recommend Americans incorporate dairy foods in all forms as an integral part of all dietary patterns," noting failure to examine the validity of existing dietary advice "will represent a lost opportunity to share newer science with consumers, health professionals and policy makers and contribute to ongoing confusion about the healthfulness of dairy."

The DGAC's final scientific advisory report submitted to the secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services notes that Americans overall need more dairy in their diets, with 88 percent of them falling short of recommendations. That figure includes 79 percent of 9-13-year-olds, who rely heavily on the school-lunch program to meet nutritional needs. The report also highlights dairy's unique place as a provider of key nutrients that otherwise would be under-consumed in American diets.

- Dairy is recommended for consumption within all three healthy eating patterns featured in the report, with three servings per day recommended in the Healthy U.S. style eating pattern and Healthy Vegetarian Style patterns and two servings per day in the Healthy-Mediterranean pattern;
- The committee recognized milk as a nutrient-rich beverage that contributes positively to under-consumed nutrients, including potassium, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, vitamins A and D, and others;
- Low-fat and nonfat dairy foods are recommended as nutrient-dense building blocks of a healthy diet; and
- In the committee's first-ever recommendations for birth through 24 months, yogurt and cheese are recognized as complementary feeding options for infants ages 6-12 months, and dairy foods (milk, cheese and yogurt) are included in healthy eating patterns for toddlers 12-24 months.

"As new research continues to prove the health benefits, dairy should continue to be revered as a great nutritional resource and valuable part of our diets, and therefore deserving of being labeled as 'healthy'," says Jeff Lyon, General Manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. "Few foods are as nutritionally dense as dairy, and even fewer provide such a unique composition of healthy fats as well as key vitamins, minerals and nutrients." 🇺🇸

Deadline to Apply for CFAP Aid Payments is August 28

Farmers looking to apply for Coronavirus Food Assistance (CFAP) aid payments at their local USDA Farm Service Agency office have until Friday, August 28.

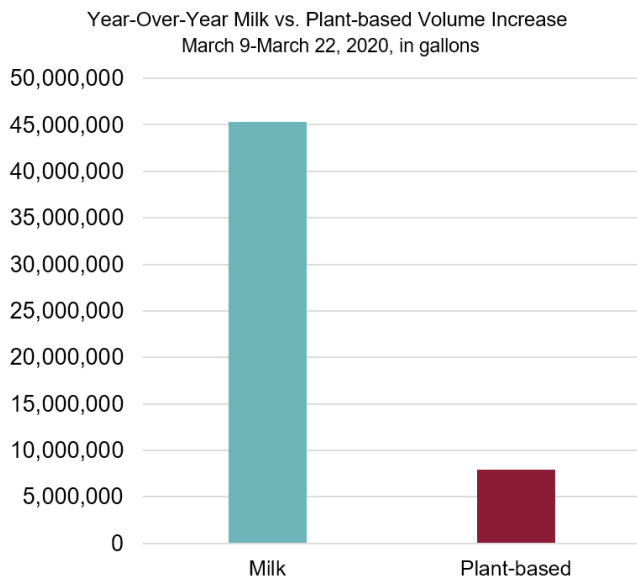
As of July 27, USDA reported paying out a total of \$6.552 billion to 473,124 applicants. Of that, \$1.286 billion has gone to dairy farmers for losses to milk checks brought on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The amount paid out to individuals to date represents 80% of their claimed COVID-19 losses. USDA is holding the other 20% in reserve to ensure that it has sufficient funds to cover at least 80% of applicants' claims, however, since \$16 billion was allocated to CFAP, it's very likely funds will not be exhausted. According to USDA's undersecretary, Bill Northey, farmers can expect to receive the remaining 20% by the end of August.

For more information on CFAP payments, most recent data reports and where to apply, visit farmers.gov/cfap. 🇺🇸

Consumers Flock to the Gold Standard During Pandemic

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Source: DMI and the National Milk Producers Federation.

U.S. that the food they produce every day is still a top-ticket item for those visiting the grocery store. Just like an empty dessert platter is a compliment to a baker, so is an empty dairy case to a dairy farmer.

Dairy farmers paid attention to the empty shelves back in March. One of our cooperative members candidly shared with me at the time ... "The milk price is starting to look abysmal, but seeing everyone flock to the grocery store and stock up on milk... That does make a dairy farmer feel good about what they do."

And they should. Dairy farmers should take pride in the wholesome product they provide to so many, especially a product packed with such valuable nutrition as vitamin A, D and calcium.

It is the gold standard of nutritional beverages, after all. 🐄

Article by Julie Sweney
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative

Get to Know Your Board: Brian Wozniak of Stanley, Wis. - District 8 Director



Name: Brian Wozniak
Location: Stanley, Wis.
First Joined the Board: 2014

Tell us more about your dairy farm.

I am a third-generation dairy farmer, which includes a grazing operation for the herd of dairy cows and acreage dedicated to cash cropping.

Brian Wozniak joined the FarmFirst board in 2014.

While I grew up in the area, my family has only been homesteading here since my grandfather traveled from Poland. The land was rich and affordable, making it appealing to my grandfather to set some roots here in Northwestern Wisconsin.

Why do you choose to be a member of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative?

I believe it is important to have a voice when elected leaders are making decisions on policy that impacts what we do as farmers. FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is always advocating on behalf of dairy farmers and has a seat at the table when it comes to developing national dairy programs. The concerns of Upper Midwest dairy farmers are heard thanks to the efforts of FarmFirst leaders and staff.

What motivated you to run for a board director seat?

A few cooperative members encouraged me to consider running for the board seat after asking a few questions during early member meetings leading to the three-cooperative merger. I decided I would throw my name on the ballot and have been on the board ever since.

What do you hope to achieve while on the board?

I would like to have more younger farmers become more involved within the cooperative and its membership programs. There are some valuable programs currently available for today's young dairy farmers through FarmFirst, though many members are not aware of all the program being offered. Increasing participation and expanding these programs can only lead to greater resources and support for today's youngest generation of dairy farmers.

When it comes to advocacy efforts, what issues are most important to you?


FarmFirst is focused on several issues at a time, though the Farm Bill always happens to be something we began discussing early and often to ensure that the programs being developed for dairy were updated and accurately represented the needs and interests of today's dairy farmers. When the opportunity arose to drastically update dairy's support program to become today's Dairy Margin Coverage program, FarmFirst had been in communications with the policy writers long before it was ever written. 🐄

Save the Date for a Fall District Meeting Near You!

Despite the current challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is continuing to plan for its 2020 Member Meetings taking place this fall. Please consider joining other FarmFirst members at a district member meeting near you to learn more about your cooperative and the advocacy being done on your behalf on federal legislative and regulatory issues.

There will be ample time for questions with board members and staff. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m. for the noon meetings, and registration begins at 7:00 p.m. for the 7:30 p.m. meetings.

Please take time to attend and provide input that ultimately sets the direction and public policies for your cooperative. Elections for delegates, D&R committee members and board of directors will be taking place. (More details to the right.) There will also be time for discussion on resolutions that will be considered by delegates at the annual meeting next February.

Members are welcome to attend any meeting that best fits their schedule or location! Make your reservation by calling 608-286-1906 to leave a message or going online to visit FarmFirst's website at www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com. For members that cannot attend, election ballots will be available by request or online. 

Date	Time	Location
Wednesday, November 4, 2020	7:30 pm	Iron Ridge Inn, Iron Ridge, Wis.
Thursday, November 5, 2020	Noon	Fox Valley Quality Control Lab, Kaukauna, Wis.
Friday, November 6, 2020	Noon	Belgiumtown Restaurant, Stephenson, Mich.
Tuesday, November 10, 2020	Noon	The American Legion, Greenwood, Wis.
Tuesday, November 10, 2020	7:30 pm	Boondocks, Boyd, Wis.
Thursday, November 12, 2020	Noon	Milhome Supper Club, Kiel, Wis.
Monday, November 16, 2019	Noon	Moose Lodge, Monroe, Wis.
Tuesday, November 17, 2020	Noon	The American Legion Hall, Marshfield, Wis.
Wednesday, November 18, 2020	Noon	Rib River Ball Room, Marathon, Wis.
Thursday, November 19, 2020	Noon	Hotel Hillsboro, Hillsboro, Wis.
Friday, November 20, 2020	Noon	Dodger Bowl, Dodgeville, Wis.
Monday, November 30, 2020	Noon	Brickhaus Bar, Farley, Iowa.
Tuesday, December 1, 2020	Noon	River Boat Lanes, Wabasha, Minn.
Wednesday, December 2, 2020	Noon	Pizza Ranch, Waite Park, Minn.
Wednesday, December 2, 2020	7:30 pm	Pizza Ranch, Pipestone, Minn.
Thursday, December 3, 2020	Noon	Pizza Ranch, Watertown, South Dakota
Friday, December 4, 2020	Noon	Pizza Ranch, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Leadership Opportunities Coming Up in 2021

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is seeking nominations! Board of Director seats that are up for election include Districts 2, 4 and 9. Districting & Resolutions Committee seats up for election include Districts 2, 4, 6 and 8. Additionally, all district delegates are up for annual election.

Nominate yourself or fellow cooperative members by October 1. Submitting nominations are easy! Visit our website at www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com and click on Submit a nomination'. Nominations are also welcome via mail, which can be addressed to FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, c/o Kathy Bauer, Secretary at 4001 Nakoosa Trail, Suite 100, Madison, WI 53714 or email any submissions to info@farmfirstcoop.com.

Delegates that are elected will serve at the 2021 Annual Member Meeting in Onalaka, Wis. on February 12-13, 2021.

Districts with Board of Director Elections:

District 2 - Wisconsin Counties of Brown, Calumet, Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Waushara and Winnebago.

District 4 - Wisconsin Counties of Langlade, Lincoln and Marathon.

District 9 - State of Minnesota and South Dakota, State of Iowa - Western Counties (west of Interstate 35), Wisconsin Counties of Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Buffalo, Burnett, Douglas, Dunn, Iron, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, St. Croix and Washbur.

Nominations are open until October 1. Make yours today! 

New District Meeting Locations!

There are a few new locations for this year's District Meetings. Check out the list and reserve your spot!

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.

Henry Allgyer, Jr.

Levi Ulrich

David & Katie Kauffman

Joseph Kurszewski

John Beiler

Levi & Mary Lapp

Mahlon & Fannie Miller

John & Kathryn Kauffman

Isaac Stoltzfus

Enos Swarey

James Schweers

Gerald Zimmerman

Lester & Marie Newswanger

Arthur Beck

Kenneth Yoder, Jr.

Aaron Yoder

James Yoder

Joe & Christine Tomandl

	UPPER MIDWEST	CENTRAL	MIDEAST
Order Name and Number	Order 30	Order 32	Order 33
Producer Milk (lbs.)	1,088,639,424	833,901,422	1,293,065,554
Producer Price Differential @ base zone	\$ -3.81	\$ -7.51	\$ -7.05
Statistical Uniform Price/cwt @ 3.5% BF*	\$ 17.23	\$ 13.53	\$ 13.99
Class I Price/cwt	\$ 13.22	\$ 13.42	\$ 13.42
Class II Price/cwt	\$ 12.99	\$ 12.99	\$ 12.99
Class III Price/cwt	\$ 21.04	\$ 21.04	\$ 21.04
Class IV Price/cwt	\$ 12.90	\$ 12.90	\$ 12.90
Component Prices & Test Avg. % aves			
Butterfat/lb.	\$ 1.8591	3.79%	3.77%
Protein/lb.	\$ 4.5349	3.03%	3.09%
Other Solids/lb.	\$ 0.16960	5.79%	5.81%
SCC Adjust Rate/1000	\$ 0.00111		5.78%
Producer Milk Classified %			
Class I	19.50%	43.06%	40.40%
Class II	17.30%	17.82%	25.80%
Class III	49.90%	6.87%	9.80%
Class IV	13.30%	32.25%	24.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



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Are Consumers Buying More Dairy?
Read our cover story and learn more about
the latest consumer trends.



You Scream, I Scream We All Scream for Ice Cream

Enter to win a Culver's gift card!

Snap a photo of you or of a family member enjoying your favorite ice cream or custard and send it to us at FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative! Send it by August 15, and we'll pick our top ten favorites, each receiving a \$10 Culver's gift card! These top ten will then have 1 randomly selected to receive the grand prize of a \$100 Culver's gift card! Learn more by visiting bit.ly/FarmFirstIceCreamContest.

Photos can be submitted online or emailed to jsweney@farmfirstcoop.com by August 15.