

MILKLINE

NEWSLETTER

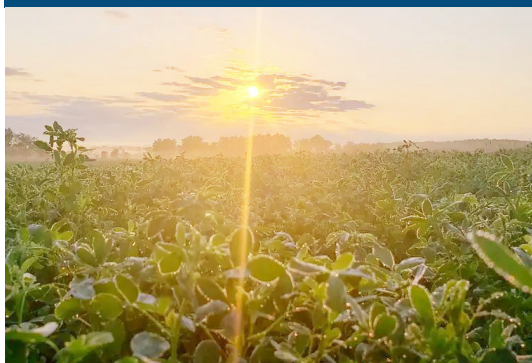


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Leadership Opportunities Await



"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." -Thomas Edison

Dairy farmers are no strangers to hard work. In fact, most people in the general population think of us hard workers, working long days in all sorts of weather, caring for our animals and spending time in a tractor and working with equipment to grow the feed for them. This is the vision that comes to mind but is only part of what defines us.

As we all know there is so much more than the physical aspects of farming. We spend quite a bit of time on the phone or meeting with all the other service providers like veterinarians, nutritionists, equipment dealers, feed sales people, risk management advisors, insurance agents... the list goes on.

Whatever depicts the day of a dairy farmer, it is true that farmers are not afraid of a little hard work. They embrace the task before them, eager to

accomplish the job and move onto the next.

However, sometimes very critical work can be in disguise. As farmers, we know the importance of caring for our cows and the land, our families and our team of employees. But what about our local communities? What about our fellow dairy farmers – across the industry?

Sometimes the most important work we do as farmers isn't what is done on the farm but off the farm. From my experiences, one of the most important roles we have as farmers is advocating for agriculture, our livelihood.

Advocating can take many forms, and as a member of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, you have numerous opportunities to serve in various leadership positions, including as a Director on the board, on the Districting & Resolutions Committee, or as a Delegate to vote on resolutions at the annual meeting held each February.

Districts 1, 3 and 5 are open in this fall's upcoming election, with District 5's Director seat currently vacant. Directors who serve on the board fulfill a three-year term before the next election cycle. Look insight on Page 5 for more information on what counties fall within each district election.

Districting & Resolutions (D&R) Committee members are responsible for reviewing submitted resolutions before providing revisions to the cooperative's public policy which is approved by our voting delegates at the annual meeting. Committee members also has the responsibility of periodically reviewing total membership throughout

the cooperative to ensure districts are balanced in membership numbers. The committee meets once a year, in early January, and each committee member serves a two-year term before another election cycle.

Delegates represent their district, and vote on the policy revisions presented at the annual cooperative meeting. Delegates are annually elected every fall. Delegates attending annual meeting take part in the cooperative's Producer Discovery Workshops, to learn more about some of the important issues our industry is addressing. Delegates are updated on accomplishments while looking to the year ahead during the cooperative's business meeting. The annual meeting is a chance to learn more about member programs and services. In addition, it is a great time to catch up with fellow dairy farmers to exchange information to take back to your own farm.

As farmers, we don't shy away from tasks that appear to be hard work. It can be hard work to serve as a leader – to find help on the farm, to get away from your regular responsibilities, or to try something new. But being a leader is some of the most rewarding work you can ever do. Think of it as an opportunity in disguise. The industry needs you, FarmFirst needs you.

Nominations for FarmFirst leadership positions close October 1st. Nominate yourself or nominate a fellow member today. 🐮

*Article by John Rettler
 FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative*

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Vice-President: Steve Brock
Daggett, Mich. 906-290-1917

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

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

Young Cooperator Rep: Travis Clark
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Bob Dietzel - *East Dubuque, Ill. 563-543-2368*

Richard Meyer - *Unity, Wis. 715-223-2058*

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

Brian Wozniak - *Stanley, Wis. 715-230-9426*

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*

Cheryl Zablocki-Wagner - *Seymour, Wis. 920-901-2173*

FOX VALLEY QUALITY CONTROL LAB

Phone: 920-731-5484

MAILING ADDRESS

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

MADISON OFFICE

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

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Cooperative Happenings

World Dairy Expo is Instrumental to the Industry, Just Like FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative



World Dairy Expo is fast approaching, and FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is looking forward to visiting with you at our booth #3507 in the Exhibition Hall. It has been two years since the last Expo was held due to COVID-19, and so many Expo attendees and cattle exhibitors are eager to revisit the annual event once again. Expo runs from September 28 through October 2.

Visitors to the FarmFirst booth will learn about the latest dairy program improvements and our advocacy accomplishments on behalf of members. Staff from our Member Services,

Family Dairies USA and Fox Valley Quality Control Lab Divisions will be at the booth sharing their expertise and knowledge.

In addition, FarmFirst has partnered with ARM Services, LLC who will have representatives on hand to share their knowledge of various risk management strategies. After the roller coaster ride that was 2020 milk markets, a dairy risk management strategy is something every dairy farm needs to have in place.

Supporting Our Youth at World Dairy Expo

World Dairy Expo brings together dairy farmers and enthusiasts from across the country, including the youth of our industry who come to Expo to participate in the 4-H Judging Contest, the Senior Fitting Contest, the Intermediate Fitting Contest, the FFA Dairy Cattle Judging Contest, the FFA Dairy Products Contest, the FFA Dairy Showmanship, and the Post-Secondary Judging Contest.

FarmFirst is proud to support these aspiring individuals that compete in these national contests and sponsor the awards for these contests. FarmFirst knows that the knowledge and lessons gained by participating in these contests will contribute to the future success of our dairy youth.

We look forward to seeing you from September 28 - October 2 at our booth #3507! 🎺



A youth exhibitor waits patiently to enter the showing for the Grand Champion of the Junior Show.



FarmFirst has been a long-time youth supporter, including past sponsorships of the junior show champion sashes.



Government & Legislative Update

Improvements to the Dairy Margin Coverage Program Announced



As part of the recent pandemic assistance being made available through USDA, improvements are being made to the Dairy Margin Coverage program. The feed cost formula is being updated to better reflect the actual cost dairy farmers pay for high quality alfalfa. This change will be retroactive to January 2020 and is expected to provide additional retroactive payments of about \$100 million for 2020 and 2021.

Unlike other pandemic assistance, this change will also be a permanent part of the safety net program. USDA estimates it will average about \$80 million per year or approximately \$800 million over ten years for dairy headed into the upcoming Farm Bill. Mike Hutjens, professor emeritus at the University of Illinois, shared with Brownfield Ag News that the \$100 million USDA earmarked for DMC improvements won't have the same impact on all dairy farms.

"Our feed costs have gone up roughly 20 percent across the board, really being driven by corn and soybean prices," says Hutjens. "It covers five million pounds of milk which means that's probably really going to affect farms that are 200 cows or less."

Hutjens says regionally, there are large price differences in the cost of alfalfa hay and its quality. If the formula moves from an average of good quality to premium hay price, he estimates that, "If hay goes up about \$40 a ton, that will mean about a difference of 55 cents per one hundred pounds of a higher feed cost."

Nearly three-quarters of dairy operations in the U.S. are enrolled in the 2021 program which has distributed more than \$550 million

in payments. USDA's adjusted alfalfa price is retroactive to 2020 and is a permanent change for the program.

"FarmFirst applauds this improvement to the Dairy Margin Coverage program to better reflect the actual cost dairy farmers pay for high quality alfalfa," says John Rettler, dairy farmer from Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst. "Making improvements to the Dairy Margin Coverage program has been a priority for FarmFirst and we are glad to see the change become a permanent part of the safety net program. Finessing and perfecting the details of the DMC program allows it to reflect actual costs. It makes a world of a difference for dairy farmers."

In addition to updating the DMC feed cost formula, an additional \$580 million has been earmarked for the Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage, which will allow smaller and medium sized dairy operations to update their milk productions history.

While signup has not been announced, the program will be for 2021-2023 and it covers 75 percent of the difference between production history established in 2011-2013 and 2019 actual production.

"FarmFirst has also been a long-time advocate for the Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage program, which will reflect modest increases in farm milk production history. These small improvements to the program allow it to more accurately reflect farmers' true margin losses and in turn, allow the program to perform as it was intended to - to support dairy farmers when their cash flow is tight," says Rettler.

While these improvements to the Dairy Margin Coverage program are appreciated by FarmFirst, we will continue to advocate for further improvements made to it to make it more meaningful to for dairy farmers. 🎺

USDA Introduces Pandemic Market Volatility Assistance Program

The USDA announced preliminary details for the Pandemic Market Volatility Assistance Program on August 19, a program which will provide \$350 million to dairy farmers to make up for a portion of the losses generated by the problematic Class I mover that has cost farmers more than \$750 million according to the National Milk Producers Federation since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic last year.

Recently, FarmFirst staff participated in a USDA webinar to gain a better understanding of the program mechanics.

"While the program will have minimal impact on cooperative members and dairy farms across the Upper Midwest due to our lower Class I utilization than in other parts of the U.S., dairy farmers will still benefit from this program. Improvements to Federal Milk Marketing Orders remains a priority for FarmFirst, and we will continue advocating for changes to improve the orders for all U.S. dairy farmers," says John Rettler, dairy farmer from

Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst.

The USDA has detailed that the Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) will provide funds to handlers to reimburse qualified dairy farmers for 80 percent of the revenue difference per month, based on annual production of up to 5 million pounds of milk marketed and on fluid milk sales from July through December 2020. USDA will make payments within 60 days of reaching an agreement with independent handlers and cooperatives, who would then have 30 days to distribute funds to qualified dairy farmers. Payment rates will vary given the different losses by order.

Dairy farmers will receive more information from their milk handler as details are announced.

The program is part of \$6 billion of pandemic assistance USDA announced in March to address a number of gaps and disparities in previous rounds of assistance. 🎺

Shaking Things Up for School Lunch

In Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Wichita, Kansas



It may be considered a sweet treat, but combined with a whole grain, it provides needed nutrition in a form that kids actually like.

“I always say it’s not nutrition if it’s not eaten,” said Julie Mattson Ostrow, a dietician with Midwest Dairy, the regional dairy checkoff group based in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Midwest Dairy is sponsoring the smoothie program and other creative meal options that get kids eating healthy and drinking more milk. Smoothies can have an impact.

A smoothie program launched in 13 Wichita, Kansas schools last school year meant the district served 300,000 more pounds of milk than usual between January and June 2021.

“Students loved it so much that it really increased milk consumption,” Mattson Ostrow said.

Breakfast cart

Grab N Go Breakfast Carts will be new in Sioux Falls schools this year. This one allowed middle schoolers in Bismarck, N.D., fill up after first period.



Grab N Go Breakfast Carts will be new in Sioux Falls schools this year. This one allowed middle schoolers in Bismarck, N.D., fill up after first period.

getting off the bus or - in the upper grades - looking for a snack after first period.

It’s a good option for kids who had a long bus ride or who

maybe came to school early for activities, Mattson Ostrow noted. It’s also an option for those who aren’t ready for breakfast early on.

“How many of us are hungry right away in the morning? Sometimes we need some time,” said Gay Anderson, child nutrition supervisor with the Sioux Falls School District.

Some items are on backorder, so the smoothies and breakfast carts might not be available on the first day of school Aug. 26. But Anderson, who came to the Sioux Falls district last December after serving 18 years in the same role at Brandon Valley, said she’s excited about how the program could grow.

“We’re trying to re-brand and come up with new menu ideas to make food exciting for kids,” she said.

Breakfast cart 2

A school breakfast cart in Wichita, Kan., offers smoothies and other grab-and-go items.

The breakfast cart in elementary schools will serve whatever is on the breakfast menu for the day - banana bread with a fruit cup and a carton of milk, for example. In the middle and high schools, Anderson would like to eventually add a hot plate to the breakfast cart and offer a warm food option.



A school breakfast cart in Wichita, Kan., offers smoothies and other grab-and-go items.

“We’re starting out with baby steps and we’ll see how we can blow this thing up,” she said.

Because the federal government approved free lunch for everyone for the coming school year, the breakfast cart items and smoothies will be free to students. Adding interesting things on the menu will get kids wanting to try breakfast at school, Mattson Ostrow said.

“The kids that are fed at school do better,” she said.

Hot chocolate milk and coffee bars for older students are other ways Midwest Dairy is helping schools get more kids drinking milk.

“All of those coffees are 8 ounces of milk with a little bit of coffee,” Mattson Ostrow said.

The pilot programs like the smoothies and breakfast carts are offered first in urban districts in an effort to have an impact on a bigger scale, Mattson Ostrow said. In rural schools, Midwest Dairy sponsors the Fuel Up to Play 60 with the NFL and offers grants to schools, including funding for smoothie kits.

This article was written by Janelle Atyeo and was reprinted with permission from Tri-State Neighbor, where the article originally appeared.

Save the Date for a Fall District Meeting Near You!

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is preparing for its 2021 Member Meetings taking place this fall. Join 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 for the noon meetings begins at 11:30 a.m., with registration starting at 7:00 p.m. for the 7:30 p.m. meetings.

Please take time to attend and help set 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! Make your reservation by calling 608-286-1906 or going online to FarmFirst’s website. For those of you that cannot attend, election ballots will be available by request or online.

Leadership Opportunities Coming Up in 2022

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is seeking nominations! Board of Director seats that are up for election include Districts 1, 3, and 5. Districting & Resolutions Committee seats up for election include Districts 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. 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

Date	Time	Location
Wednesday, November 3, 2021	7:30 pm	Iron Ridge Inn, Iron Ridge, Wis.
Thursday, November 4, 2021	Noon	Fox Valley Quality Control Lab, Kaukauna, Wis.
Friday, November 5, 2021	Noon	Belgiumtown Restaurant, Stephenson, Mich.
Monday, November 8, 2021	Noon	Hotel Hillsboro, Hillsboro, Wis.
Tuesday, November 9, 2021	Noon	Rib River Ball Room, Marathon, Wis.
Friday, November 12, 2021	Noon	Dodger Bowl, Dodgeville, Wis.
Monday, November 29, 2021	Noon	Locals Bar & Coffee Shop , Epworth, Iowa
Tuesday, November 30, 2021	Noon	River Boat Lanes, Wabasha, Minn.
Tuesday, November 30, 2021	7:30 pm	Stout Craft Company, Menomonie, Wis.
Wednesday, December 1, 2021	Noon	Pooch Corner Pub, Freeport, Minn.
Wednesday, December 1, 2021	7:30 pm	Pizza Ranch, Pipestone, Minn.
Thursday, December 2, 2021	Noon	Pizza Ranch, Watertown, South Dakota
Friday, December 3, 2021	Noon	Pizza Ranch, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Monday, December 6, 2021	Noon	The American Legion, Greenwood, Wis.
Monday, December 6, 2021	7:30 pm	Village Haus, Boyd, Wis.
Tuesday, December 7, 2021	Noon	The American Legion Hall, Marshfield, Wis.
Wednesday, December 8, 2021	Noon	Pizza Ranch, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Thursday, December 9, 2021	Noon	Moose Lodge, Monroe, Wis.

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 2022 Annual Member Meeting in Onalaska, Wis. on February 11-12, 2022.

Districts with Board of Director Elections:

District 1 – Wisconsin Counties of

Florence, Forest, Marinette, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

District 3 - Wisconsin Counties of Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Rock, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha.

District 5 – Wisconsin Counties of Adams, Crawford, Green Lake, Iowa, Juneau, Marquette, Portage, Richland, Sauk, Vernon and Wood.

Nominations are open until October 1. Make yours today!

USDA Rolls Out the Dairy Donation Program (DDP)

The 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act directed USDA to develop a \$400 million Dairy Donation Program (DDP) to facilitate or expand dairy product donations and reduce food waste. Under this program, eligible dairy organizations will form partnerships with non-profit organizations that distribute food to individuals and families in need, and apply reimbursements to cover some expenses related to eligible dairy product donations. The following is a brief program overview:

• **Eligible Dairy Organizations.** The DDP is open to dairy farmers, cooperatives,

and processors that purchase fresh milk or bulk dairy products to process into retail-packaged dairy products.

• **Dairy Product Eligibility.** The DDP is open to all dairy products, including milk, yogurt, butter, cheese, cottage cheese, and ice cream. This is much broader eligibility than under the MDRP which only covered fluid milk. The products must be made available in consumer-sized packages and must meet the applicable dairy product provisions under Food and Drug Administration regulations.

• **Reimbursements.** As part of the Act,

the program will reimburse processors at the full classified value of the raw milk used to produce the dairy product on the date of manufacture, not on the date of donation. Dairy organizations participating in the MDRP will receive the full reimbursement under the DDP as opposed to just that smaller amount. USDA will also reimburse for manufacturing and transportation costs.

• **Retroactivity.** Donations made on or after January 1, 2020 will be eligible for reimbursement.

Visit FarmFirst’s website for more details on the Dairy Donation Program.

JULY 2021

	UPPER MIDWEST	CENTRAL	MIDEAST
Order Name and Number	Order 30	Order 32	Order 33
Producer Milk (lbs.)	1,918,430,639	1,314,486,151	1,597,548,812
Producer Price Differential @ base zone	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.35	\$ 0.60
Statistical Uniform Price/cwt @ 3.5% BF*	\$ 16.74	\$ 16.84	\$ 17.81
Class I Price/cwt	\$ 19.22	\$ 19.42	\$ 20.29
Class II Price/cwt	\$ 16.83	\$ 16.83	\$ 16.66
Class III Price/cwt	\$ 16.49	\$ 16.49	\$ 17.21
Class IV Price/cwt	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.35
Component Prices & Test Avg. % aves			
Butterfat/lb.	\$ 1.8996	3.89%	3.78%
Protein/lb.	\$ 2.4957	3.08%	3.10%
Other Solids/lb.	\$ 0.41810	5.79%	5.78%
SCC Adjust Rate/1000	\$ 0.00080		
Producer Milk Classified %			
Class I	10.30%	25.72%	31.20%
Class II	5.00%	11.10%	23.80%
Class III	76.30%	38.60%	29.00%
Class IV	8.40%	24.58%	16.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



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Learn more about how FarmFirst
is Instrumental to the Industry at
World Dairy Expo

Volatility in the Milk Market



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Today's dairy producers face an ever evolving and volatile milk market. While you cannot control what the market does, you can protect how it impacts you. Managing risk doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. In today's volatile market, it's vital for dairy farmers of all sizes to protect their milk price using a variety of resources available to them.

At ARM Services, LLC, we take pride in the work we do for dairy farmers – because ultimately, we are providing protection for our clients to have a higher average milk price than what they would be receiving otherwise. We make the work easy for them by crunching numbers and studying the milk markets, so farmers can do what they love – farm.



Call us at ARM Services to learn about the options available to you. And if you're currently using DMC, LGM, DRP or a hedge account, we welcome the opportunity to review your plan to ensure you're getting the best value. **There's no cost or commitment required to ask questions! Call us today: 715-456-5607.**