

MILKLINE

NEWSLETTER



HIGHLIGHTS: *Resolutions Due Dec. 31* p 2
2022 Scholarships Available p 2

Applause for Ocean Shipping Act p 3
Momentum on FMMO Reform p 3

Lyon Elected to Coop Network Board p 4
Sign Up for DMC 2022 Now Open p 5

Dumplings & Pie



The holidays are fast-approaching, and as my wife, Judy and I look forward to celebrating the upcoming holiday, we're reminded of how our family traditions have changed through the years, and how so much has also stayed the same.

A Mighty Pine.

Our holiday season always began with finding a Christmas tree in our woods on the farm... until the trees in our woods grew too tall to bring into the house! Decorating the tree was a family affair, and now, Judy and I work together on decorating the tree, as I help her decorate the very top of the 9-foot pine. The tree might not be from our back woods anymore, but it's still very special.

Reason for the Season.

Our Christmas celebration always began by attending church Christmas Eve, which was the candlelight service. It makes me laugh thinking how our family would squeeze into the church pew together and how the kids enjoyed

holding their candles during this special service.

Christmas morning was also filled with chores and church, and then we were all headed to Grandma and Grandpa's house. The days were always filled with fun and excitement for the gifts that were opened. The time always came too fast when we would have to head home to take care of chores. When our children were little, it was important to us to instill these two values in our children, that it is an honor to be a farmer to serve as a steward of the land and our animals, and to show gratitude for all that we have. It's easy to get excited about everything surrounding this holiday, but we didn't want our children, and now our grandchildren, to forget the true reason for the season.

Dumplings & Pie.

For the last several years, our 40+ family gathers at our home, on the Saturday before Christmas, beginning at noon with a full menu. (The photo includes Judy and I with our eight children.) Judy provides the main food items with salads, dips, and snacks brought in by family. It's easy to find dairy products in nearly every menu item. A few items are particularly special, including red headed dumplings, which are a huge Meyer family tradition! Pies are also family favorites, including a few chocolate chip pies which are made to enjoy at our family Christmas as well. Dumplings and pies might seem like another item on the menu, but they are extra special when they help define the holiday (recipes on page 4). Especially when we know dairy products helped make them so delicious!

Family.

After enjoying the last of the red dumplings and chocolate chip pie, the celebration continues with more socializing, board games being played, and all-day football viewing, with the festivities lasting until midnight. Those that have to leave to do chores do so (I usually take the night off) but they all return for more food and fun. By that time, Mr. and Mrs. Claus are exhausted but very thankful for a wonderful day spent with family.

Family traditions have certainly evolved over the years, from when Judy and I were first started our family to how it has grown to include our grandchildren today. While many things have changed, many things have not, including our passion for farming, our faith and how much our family means to us.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, and a healthy and blessed New Year. May this holiday bring the return of many traditions, and the start of some new. 🍷



Rich Meyer,

Director of District 7, is featured in this month's cover story. Rich and his wife, Judy, live in Unity, Wis. and farm with two of

their two sons, Dennis and Thomas, and their grandson, Trevor, on their farm, REM-JEM Dairy. Rich has been a board member since 1998 and is proud to represent FarmFirst members.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Resolutions Due by December 31st

Members are encouraged to submit resolutions to be considered for the Districting & Resolutions (D&R) Committee. The D&R Committee will meet in early January to review all submitted resolutions and prepare final resolutions to be presented for delegates to vote on at the 2022 Annual Meeting.



How to submit a resolution:

- **By email** - send your resolutions to jlyon@farmfirstcoop.com. Include 'Resolutions' in the email subject line.
- **By mail** - send your written resolutions to the FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative office, located at 4001 Nakoosa Trail, Suite 100, Madison, WI 53714.

All resolutions need to be sent by December 31st. 

Today's
Vision
TOMORROW'S SUCCESS



Plan to attend our 2022 Producer Discovery Workshop Series set for Friday, February 11 at the Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center in Onalaska, Wis. More details to come in the January MilkLine.


2022 Scholarship Applications Now Available



Scholarship applications are available once again for the 2022 FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative scholarship program. The application deadline is **March 31, 2022**. Please review the application for student eligibility and criteria. Applications are available online at 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 to access the form. Please confirm receipt of your application.

Winter break is the perfect time for students to complete FarmFirst's 2022 Scholarship Application! Encourage your son or daughter to take a few minutes to review the application requirements today before second semester begins. 

visit us on
FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com

FarmFirst Applauds House Passage of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act



FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative applauds the passage by the House of Representatives of the bipartisan Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2021 (OSRA) with an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 364-6 on December 8.

Unprecedented challenges have plagued supply chains affecting every corner of manufacturing in the U.S., while specifically costing the U.S. dairy industry more than \$1 billion this year alone. The plethora of issues stem from challenges securing shipping containers accompanied by record-high fees. If passed by the Senate and signed into law, the legislation will help alleviate delays and disruptions at U.S. ports that have cost the U.S. dairy industry greatly.

"The passage of this legislation in the House this week marks the first step in restoring the efficiency of our supply chains as they were pre-pandemic," says John Rettler, dairy farmer of Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst. "The reputation of U.S. dairy has been hard-earned across the globe with our exporters, and it is

important that this isn't threatened by congestion at our ports. We applaud the immense bipartisan support this piece of legislation has received and look forward to its continued progress through the legislature. Exporting U.S. dairy products provide value to dairy farmers, who in turn work with other local businesses for a variety of services. Ensuring we can continue to move our quality U.S. dairy products offshore, efficiently and effectively, will continue to pay dividends for the U.S."

To reiterate the importance of the legislation, FarmFirst signed a letter along with 77 other dairy cooperatives, companies and organizations to emphasize the potential positive impact the legislation could have on the U.S. dairy industry, which was sent to Congressional leaders on Dec. 8.

"Addressing these issues we're experiencing at our ports is critical to U.S. dairy, but it is also will address issues being felt across all our supply chains. As the letter states, ocean carriers are shipping empty containers across the Pacific Ocean at record rates of over 70%. This is lost opportunity in ensuring the maximum amount of dairy exports are leaving our shores and getting into the hands of consumers in Asia and elsewhere," says Rettler. "We look forward to the continued progress of OSRA through the Senate and seeing improvement in the shipping challenges we've been facing." 🇺🇸

Dairy Pricing Opportunity Act Provides Momentum on Reform

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is encouraged by the legislation introduced by Senator Gillibrand on Dec. 1, which would require the USDA to hold a federal milk marketing order hearing. As a strong proponent to making much-needed changes to the federal order system, this is welcomed news.

With more than 2,700 dairy farmer members across the Upper Midwest, FarmFirst knows the importance of improving the federal orders and the value it would bring to both dairy farmers and processors.

"In the spring of 2021, FarmFirst shared our proposal of returning to the "higher of" the class III or class IV pricing formula. When reviewing other proposals and options, we came back to using the "higher of" since it was fully vetted in a national hearing process nearly twenty years ago and has served the industry well. The formula has a good track record, is simple and straightforward," says Jeff Lyon, general manager of FarmFirst.

"In addition to addressing the class I pricing, FarmFirst is engaged in industry discussions regarding additional reforms that are long overdue to the federal order. FarmFirst has been involved in these conversations on both a regional and national perspective, having identified several aspects of the order to be improved upon," adds Lyon. "We look forward to working with our partners in Washington, D.C. on all the federal order issues that need to be addressed." 🇺🇸

Congress Urged to Focus on Agricultural Trade

During a Nov. 17 subcommittee hearing with the U.S. House of Representatives, dairy took the spotlight to emphasize the need for the U.S. government to pursue new market access opportunities.



This testimony was led by Simon Vander Woude, a dairy farmer from California Dairies Inc. who pointed to the preferential market access that the European Union, Australia, and New Zealand have aggressively negotiated in a list of key dairy markets and the subsequent loss of American dairy competitiveness as the playing field continues to tilt against the United States. The list of priority markets to target for expanded access included China, Southeast Asia, Japan, the Middle East, and the United Kingdom.

It was also noted that both new trade deals, such as the USMCA agreement, and longstanding bilateral agreements warrant strong enforcement, in addition to ensuring WTO members live up to their obligations to preserving hard-won market access opportunities.

FarmFirst will continue to work on addressing trade concerns while exploring new trade opportunities. 🇺🇸

161 Million Pounds of Butter to be Purchased for the Holidays



Home baking is back in full swing during the holiday season, and Americans are expected to purchase 161 million lb. of butter between the second week of November

through Christmas. That's enough to bake more than 11 billion butter cookies!

While butter sales usually increase during the holidays, the pandemic, which spiked a rebirth of home cooking, has also caused butter sales to grow significantly year-round, according to a Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin press release. With home cooking and baking on the rise, the organization has seen a 400% spike in recipe searches over the course of the pandemic.

Twenty years ago, the average American consumed roughly 4.3 lb. of butter throughout the year, according to Statista. From 2011 to 2018, this increased to an average of 5.6 lb. before jumping to over 6 lb. in 2019. In 2020, the year the Coronavirus Pandemic began, butter consumption spiked to 6.3 lb. of butter consumed per year, a high never seen before. While its unsure as to the average amount of butter consumed in 2021, it likely will not fall below the 6 lb. mark. 🇺🇸

Lyon Elected to Cooperative Network Board of Directors

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative General Manager, Jeff Lyon, has been elected to the Cooperative Network board of directors. Cooperative Network is the largest statewide co-op trade association in the U.S., representing



a diverse group of cooperatives including agricultural, electric, energy, credit unions, and consumer cooperatives across the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota.



"Cooperative Network has been a tremendous advocate

for cooperative business and values that are important to grassroots organizations, like FarmFirst," says Lyon, "As a member of the board, I look forward to working with cooperative members and the CN staff to advance our collective legislative initiatives to help in our members success." 🇺🇸



Dairy Delights: Red-Headed Dumplings

Ingredients

- 3 1/2 quarts of cubed bread
- 10 eggs
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 Tablespoon of salt
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 cup melted butter

Cooking Directions

Mix all ingredients together. Form into balls (mixture should hold together). Deep fat fry in vegetable oil until brown.

Can be frozen until when needed. When ready to serve, bring water to boiling, add frozen dumplings and boil 15 minutes. Serve with lots of gravy.

Recipe provided by Rich & Judy Meyer, District 7 Director from Unity, Wisconsin. 🇺🇸



Dairy Delights: Judy's Chocolate Chip Pie

Crust Ingredients

- 15 graham crackers (crushed)
- 1/4 cups melted butter
- 1 level tbsp sugar

Filling Ingredients

- 20 large marshmallows
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 1/2 squares of bitter chocolate (grated)
- 1 cup whipped cream

Baking Directions

CRUST: Mix all the crust ingredients together well. Save some crumbs to sprinkle on top. Press into pie pan. Refrigerate.

FILLING: Put large marshmallows and milk in large microwave bowl. Microwave until marshmallows are melted. Stir. Cool. When cool, fold in grated 1 1/2 sq. bitter chocolate and 1 cup whipped cream. Pour into crust. Sprinkle cracker crumbs, maraschino cherries, and chopped nuts on top.

Recipe provided by Rich & Judy Meyer, District 7 Director from Unity, Wisconsin. 🇺🇸

FarmFirst Welcomes 2022 Dairy Margin Coverage Sign-Up with Enhanced Program Features



FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative applauds the announcement made by the USDA today, sharing that enrollment is now open for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program and will run from Dec. 13, 2021 through Feb. 18, 2022. The program also received some enhanced features to its feed cost formula, providing a better value for participating producers.


"FarmFirst welcomes the sign-up period for the 2022 DMC program, as FarmFirst and our industry partners have worked hard to advocate for valuable improvements to the feed cost calculation," says John Rettler, dairy farmer from Neosho, Wis. and president of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. "The DMC program has continued to see improvements since it was first implemented, thanks to the feedback farmers continue to share on the program. Clearly, the program continues to be a worthwhile investment, as so far, 10 out of 12 months for the year 2021 have seen payments at the \$9.50 level."

As of Dec. 6, USDA data showed more than \$1.1 billion in DMC payments are expected to be distributed to dairy producers under the 2021 program. It is anticipated that the remaining two months of the

year will also have payments through the DMC program, continuing into the new year.

"FarmFirst encourages dairy farmers to once again enroll in the 2022 Dairy Margin Coverage program, especially with these enhancements made to the program. Simply put, it provides a cost-effective, inexpensive level of catastrophic coverage for dairy farmers," says Rettler. "We applaud the efforts of Congress and the USDA in making these improvements to this invaluable program, as well as our dairy farm members who have continued to share with us their experience in how the DMC program performs."

The DMC program in 2022 will use the premium-quality alfalfa price into the DMC feed cost formula, which is an improvement from the current structure that used a 50-50 blend between the premium-quality price and the regular price. Additionally, USDA will make retroactive payments on this premium alfalfa calculation to producers to January 2020. To complement this further, the new Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage program will enable some producers who are also enrolled in DMC to receive additional payments reflecting increases in their production since 2014 retroactively to January 2021.

FarmFirst encourages all dairy farmers to sign up for the DMC program in 2022. To sign up, contact your local FSA office. 

Risk Management: What to Know at DMC Enrollment, and the Year Ahead



Insuring the Future of Farming.

There have been some great enhancements

to the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program, so it is important to sign up for 2022 coverage.

Increasing Production History

One new enhancement in particular is being able to increase your milk production history through the Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage program. If you have more pounds of milk production in 2019 than in prior years, you can increase your production history base so it more accurately reflects what your production history is moving forward. ***These opportunities to update production histories are not common, so you will not want to miss out on your chance to do so now.***

Enrollment

The first item of business to complete at your next FSA visit is to update your production history. Then, because the Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage will provide retroactive payments from January 2020

through 2021, you'll want to enroll in this part of the program as well. Then, the last step will be to enroll in coverage for 2022.

ARM Services has studied how various dairy risk management programs have performed within the volatility of the milk market. We've back tested this program to see how it would have performed before it was created, and every year except one, payment levels would have exceeded the cost of the premium levels. From our perspective of having built risk management plans for more than 14 years, we highly recommend that dairy farmers sign up for their first 5 million pounds at the \$9.50 level. For any additional coverage beyond the first 5 million pounds, we recommend selecting coverage at the \$5.00 level. This additional coverage should only cost about \$0.005/cwt, which makes it an incredible option of coverage during volatile markets.

The Year Ahead

With DMC locked in for 2022, you might be feeling pretty optimistic, but I'm here to tell you that you're still leaving money


on the table. The dairy markets are in a unique position right now, making it a great opportunity to place a floor on your milk price. ARM Services has focused our efforts on maximizing the return for our farmers, and that means protecting the price from bottoming out, but never placing a cap to prevent any potential profits.

ARM Services has the experience and resources to share with you how to not only protect your bottom line against the volatile markets, but to make your hard work on producing high-quality milk go further. Call us today at 715-456-5607, and ask your questions on how our strategy can deliver for you in 2022 and beyond.

FarmFirst has partnered with ARM Services LLC



**Call Travis Glaser at
ARM Services:
715-456-5607**

to provide resources and expertise on dairy risk management. Whether you are familiar with risk management or asking questions about a new strategy, we are confident that ARM Services can answer your questions and build a plan that can meet your goals. 

OCTOBER 2021

	UPPER MIDWEST		CENTRAL	MIDEAST
Order Name and Number	Order 30	Order 32	Order 33	
Producer Milk (lbs.)	1,446,642,762	1,049,506,565	1,614,497,222	
Producer Price Differential @ base zone	\$ -0.16	\$ -0.64	\$ -0.13	
Statistical Uniform Price/cwt @ 3.5% BF*	\$ 17.67	\$ 17.19	\$ 17.70	
Class I Price/cwt	\$ 18.88	\$ 19.28	\$ 19.28	
Class II Price/cwt	\$ 17.08	\$ 17.08	\$ 17.08	
Class III Price/cwt	\$ 17.83	\$ 17.83	\$ 17.83	
Class IV Price/cwt	\$ 17.04	\$ 17.04	\$ 17.04	
Component Prices & Test Avg. % aves				
Butterfat/lb.	\$ 1.9414	4.02%	4.08%	3.93%
Protein/lb.	\$ 3.0130	3.16%	3.34%	3.22%
Other Solids/lb.	\$ 0.35600	5.81%	5.77%	5.76%
SCC Adjust Rate/1000	\$ 0.00088			
Producer Milk Classified %				
Class I	14.50%	35.37%	33.80%	
Class II	12.50%	13.12%	19.60%	
Class III	63.00%	23.60%	36.30%	
Class IV	10.00%	27.91%	10.30%	
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	



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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.

Kevin Tiry

James and Lillian Nolt

Samuel Leedle

Judy Malisheski

Samuel and Fannie Kurtz

Collin Kinning

Gary Koppes

Andy & Alex Wilwert

Michael Zimmerman

Joe Bornreger

Kyle & Sarah Mauk

Allen & Amy Wery

David & Katie Beiler

Benjamin & Gina Claerbeaut

Crist and Lavina Hoover

Lamar and Esther Martin



Sign up for the FarmFirst E-Newsletter!

Don't miss out on receiving industry news and cooperative updates! The FarmFirst e-newsletter arrives every Friday morning in your email inbox to read at your convenience. Submit your email by visiting www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com, calling 608-286-1909 or emailing info@farmfirstcoop.com.