

MILKLINE

NEWSLETTER

FARM FIRST™
DAIRY COOPERATIVE

HIGHLIGHTS: *Attend FarmFirst's Workshops* p 2
Holding Canada Accountable p 3

WOTUS Rule Disappoints p 3
2023 Elected Delegates p 4

Attend ARM Winter Conference p 5
2023 Scholarships Available p 5

Dairy as a Sustainability Trailblazer



When it comes to the word 'sustainability,' it means something different to everyone depending on their background, stage in life and their priorities. The word is most often affiliated with the environment and climate smart initiatives, but the word sustainability is also used when referring to business decisions and ensuring an organization thrives today and long into the future.

For dairy, all these definitions are relevant - and important - for it's continued success.

Addressing Environmental Concerns

When the conversation shifts towards the impact of dairy farming on the environment, particularly air, soil health and waterways, it is important to see this as an opportunity to share dairy's story of how farmers have always been

stewards of the land and that improving soil health, maintaining high quality water while minimizing effects to the air is important to grow high quality feed for dairy cattle. The concept might be simple, but to a general consumer audience, it is a concept they likely have overlooked.

“At the end of the day, U.S. dairy farmers are leading the conversation, reminding national leaders and critics that dairy is the environmental solution.”

By transitioning the conversation into 'us' and 'we' instead of 'you' and 'them,' the entire theme becomes all about how we are in this together. Because we are. An essential part of our environmental success is gaining consumers' trust in dairy.

The U.S. dairy industry has worked hard to clearly define our goals, and while at times it feels like fingers are being pointed at livestock farmers and their "flatulent cows," we need to overlook the accusations and realize the opportunity in front of us. This is our chance to share how nutrients are returned to the soil and what field and farm management practices are done to ensure the soil is best prepared for the next growing season. The conversation needs to include how these soil health practices in turn help protect natural waterways, and ultimately that each of these smaller actions help protect the environment that we all rely on for wholesome, healthy, and safe nutritious food for our communities.

On that same note, if there's something we can do to improve what we're doing that makes a positive difference for the environment or otherwise, we must consider it. The very first step is to be part of the conversation and ensure we are among the decision makers. FarmFirst

is advocating for your behalf from our seat at the table, elevating the message of the good work dairy farmers already do on their farms everyday and incentivizing new conservation programs.

Taking Initiative

Thanks to the progressive, forward-thinking leaders within the industry, dairy has taken a proactive approach in gathering the details of U.S. dairy's sustainability story. It was in 2008 when U.S. dairy was the first in the food agricultural sector to conduct a full life cycle assessment at a national level which showed it contributes just 2% of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

While we are proud of our minimal impact, the industry is dedicated to making further progress. One great example of this progress is the U.S. Dairy Net Zero Initiative. By 2050, U.S. dairy collectively commits to

Continued on Page 5...

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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Attend FarmFirst's Producer Discovery Workshops on Friday, Feb. 10 in Stevens Point

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative welcomes dairy farmers to attend the cooperative's Producer Discovery Workshop series as part of its 2023 Annual Meeting taking place on Friday, February 10, 2023 at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center in Stevens Point, Wis.



'Members Make the Difference' is the cooperative's 2023 Annual Meeting theme, which showcases the vital role cooperative members have in providing guidance for the cooperative's programs and legislative priorities. With a full decade of advocacy and expansion of educational opportunities, FarmFirst can attribute its success to the membership's values in grassroots leadership and industry expertise. Participating in the cooperative's workshop series allows for members to ask industry experts questions that allow them to be more informed about programs and regulations that impact their farm.



1:15 p.m. U.S. Dairy: Working Together to Collectively Impact Sustainability

Jennifer Block, Senior Vice President of Dairy Community Relations at the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy was created through the dairy farmer checkoff to address growing global sustainability issues and opportunities. The Innovation Center is aligned behind a framework of shared priorities, goals, work, and metrics that inspires new belief in dairy and positions U.S. dairy as a relevant and credible solution for a more sustainable future. Learn how the industry is working to build trust and increase dairy customer confidence through this industry-wide sustainability platform.



2:45 p.m. Legislative Update: Your Cooperative Voice Advocating for Agriculture

Jennifer Wickman, Wisconsin Government Affairs Director for Cooperative Network

As the trusted voice for cooperatives and their members, Cooperative Network advocates in the state capitols of Wisconsin and Minnesota and has a long and successful history of lobbying on local and statewide agriculture issues. With State Budgets being the focus in 2023, farmers will want to attend this session for a glimpse of the lobbying priorities of Cooperative Network on the issues that will affect dairy farmers and their businesses.

There is no cost to attend, however attendees are asked to make reservations to ensure sufficient seating. Call Julie at 608-286-1909 by February 7 to make a reservation. For more information about FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative's 11th Annual Meeting and to learn more about the guest speakers, please visit www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com.

visit us on FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com

Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FarmFirstDairyCooperative

U.S. Holding Canada Accountable for USMCA Violations



After a steady – and loud – drumbeat of the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) insistence that Canada

must honor its dairy obligations in the U.S.-Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA), the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) announced Dec. 20 that it is filing a new request for dispute settlement consultations with Canada.

The move will expand the scope of a second USMCA dairy dispute to include additional elements necessary to ensure that Canada fully complies with its USMCA market-access

obligations. Since the United States launched its initial USMCA dispute panel in May 2021, NMPF and USDEC have fully and vocally supported USTR and USDA in their dogged attempts to secure for American dairy producers the agreement’s full negotiated benefits.

For over a year, Canada has violated USMCA’s tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) provisions by reserving most of its preferential dairy TRQs for Canadian processors. Canada’s revised approach to TRQs, released in March 2022, still violated the agreement – prompting USTR to pursue a second USMCA enforcement action.

The USTR’s meticulous work leading to this new announcement has not gone unnoticed by national dairy leaders, however, Canada has a long history of restricting trade and not honoring existing agreements. FarmFirst will work in stride with NMPF and USDEC as a united front pushing for retaliatory measures that make Canadian officials reconsider their actions should that continue. 🇺🇸

WOTUS Rule Disappoints Dairy, Industry Calls for Action



Yet another iteration of federal rulemaking guiding regulation of Waters of the U.S., released Dec. 30, drew criticism from NMPF and numerous agricultural groups for adding unnecessary confusion to an already fraught history.

“NMPF is disappointed that once again dairy farmers, who every day strive to be leaders in environmental stewardship, may need to live under a WOTUS rule that is cumbersome, unclear and overly complicated,” NMPF President and CEO Jim Mulhern said in a statement released Jan. 3. Because the EPA’s most recent iteration fails to resolve what is now a 50-year struggle to define what constitutes a water body subject to federal regulation under the Clean Water Act, our members will face continued uncertainty as they attempt to comprehend and comply with unclear regulations.

NMPF, a supporter of the Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR) that had previously guided WOTUS policy, noted that the new rule was not a complete retreat from that regulation. “EPA’s listed exemptions at least try to address some of

agriculture’s concerns over lack of clarity,” Mulhern said in the statement. “Even so, EPA is reintroducing considerable ambiguity in this version of the rule as it attempts to determine what is a ‘Water of the US’ as seen in the treatment of ditches, ephemeral streams and groundwater, all of which were largely categorically out under the NWPR. NMPF fully anticipates continued litigation as a result of this rule.

NMPF called for congressional action to break the back-and-forth that has created confusion and brought added costs to dairy producers.

“It’s now clear that four successive administrations of both political parties have been unable to resolve this matter in a way that satisfies the broad range of stakeholders and provides long-term regulatory certainty which is badly needed,” Mulhern said in the statement. “Depending on the outcome of the Sackett case this spring, it may be time for Congress to step in in a bipartisan manner to provide clarity regarding which bodies of water are under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act.” 🇺🇸

Delegates Elected for 11th Annual Meeting

All members had an opportunity to nominate, and then vote for fellow members to serve as delegates or alternates to the upcoming 11th Annual Meeting of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative being held in-person on February 11. During the business meeting, these individuals will review resolutions and any proposed bylaws, and provide feedback and direction to cooperative leadership. The following members were elected in their respective districts:

Keeping Trains (and Boats) Running

NMPF staff and allied organizations played critical roles in keeping transportation networks running in early December, as the prospect of a rail labor strike heightened concerns of an already strained supply chain completely derailing. To ensure that the rail service remained uninterrupted for dairy producers who rely on consistent rail movement both for sourcing feed and moving finished product, NMPF took member concerns to Capitol Hill.

Four rail labor unions voted in November to reject a tentative agreement arbitrated by the Biden Administration, authorizing a strike that could have begun as early as Dec. 9. To avoid a costly rail service shutdown, NMPF, the USDEC and allied groups pressed hard for congressional intervention via a series of letters and meetings. Congress passed legislation implementing the tentative agreement, with President Biden signing the law on Dec. 2 and averting a rail shutdown.

The rail efforts, while significant, were only one facet of NMPF's recent supply chain efforts. NMPF and USDEC on Dec. 13 wrote to Federal Maritime Commission Secretary William Cody with feedback on the agency's proposed rulemaking on detention and demurrage billing requirements for ocean-bound shipments.

The Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2022, passed in June and championed by NMPF and USDEC, provided an important foundation in confronting abuses leveled by ocean carriers on dairy shippers. However, smart, balanced implementation is still needed to ensure that dairy exporters are fully protected against unfair fees, which cost significant resources to resolve. 

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, Mark Leichtfuss, Andy Meyer, Jim Smidel*

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

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

District 5: *Tom Bauer, Will Beitlich, Jackie Hoffman, Sharon Laubscher, Peter Mallek, Peggy Pankratz, Abby Swan*

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

District 7: *Melissa Boehlke, Paul Fischer, Dean Hoesly, Mitch Malm, Randy Meyer, Richard Meyer, Michelle Popp, Dean Schmelzer, Tom Shafto*

District 8: *Doug Danielson, Shaun Decker, Dan Holub, Gary Kohn, Tim Mahr, George Polzin, Kyle Sikora*

District 9: *Riley Boadwine, Anne Borgschatz, Joe Bragger, Cody Lubben, 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 - Michelle Popp
- District 8 - Jackie Holub

D&R Committee:

- District 2 - Jim Smidel
- District 4 - David Hannemann
- District 6 - Jerry Hammerand
- District 8 - George Polzin

ARM Services Hosts 13th Annual Winter Ag Conference

Registration and lunch are free to all dairy and crop farmers

ARM Services invites all dairy and crop farmers to attend their 13th Annual Winter Ag Conference being held Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at the Stout Ale House in Menomonie, Wis. Registration is free to all dairy and crop farmers. The event welcomes farmers to arrive at 9 a.m. with the conference kicking off at 9:30 a.m. and running until 3:30 p.m.

ARM Services, an agricultural risk management agency based in Barron, Wis., strives to provide farmers with the right tools and resources to help farmers succeed. Farmers gain a unique perspective from industry experts during their winter conference, which can prove to be valuable when preparing for the year ahead as farmers build their risk management plans. This year's conference speakers and topics include:



How Close Are We to a New Agricultural Cycle?

Michael Swanson, an agricultural economist and consultant for Wells Fargo, will explore the record farm revenues, expenses and profits the USDA has projected for 2022, and the chances they'll continue into 2023 and 2024. He will analyze what the key drivers are and how farmers can prepare to respond to agriculture's next inevitable cycle.



Policy Talk: What to Expect in 2023

Pro Farmer Policy Analyst Jim Wiesemeyer will share his insight on the latest policy reform and its potential impact on U.S. dairy and crop farmers. From domestic farm policy changes to international trade agreements, his insight on the pulse of Washington will help farmers better understand what challenges and opportunities are in store.



Five Common Mistakes in Grain Marketing

Edward Usset serves as the Grain Marketing Economist for the Center of Farm Financial Management at the University of Minnesota. He will explore a different approach to marketing where farmers will discover that great marketing is not predicting prices but eliminating mistakes in everyday decisions. His presentation will showcase how eliminating mistakes can create a solid foundation in the development of pre- and post-harvest marketing plans.

"It's impossible to accurately predict commodity futures, but with the right tools and expertise, it is possible to build a solid risk marketing plan. This annual ag conference is meant to be just that - an opportunity for farmers to gain more knowledge from industry experts regarding markets and the year ahead so they can build a better management plan for their farming operation," says Travis Glaser, co-owner and agent at ARM Services. "The markets are unpredictable but having this information available to farmers can make a difference in how their farm financially performs in the year ahead."



Interested dairy and crop farmers should register by contacting ARM Services via phone (715) 418-2676 or emailing RSVP@agriskman.com. Registration is required for lunch purposes. Register by Monday, January 16. 🇺🇸

2023 Scholarship Applications Now Available



Scholarship applications are available once again for the 2023 FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative scholarship program. The

application deadline is **March 31, 2023.**

Please review the application for student eligibility and criteria, and ensure all pieces of the application are submitted. 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 online form. Please confirm receipt of your application. Printed copies must be received or postmarked by March 31, 2023 to be considered. 🇺🇸

Dairy as a Sustainability Trailblazer

Continued from Page 1

achieving greenhouse gas neutrality, optimizing water use while maximizing recycling and to improve water quality. In turn, these benchmarks will build a more sustainable food system, and therefore a more sustainable industry for dairy farmers and their families to thrive in for years to come.

Be sure to join the conversation on Friday, February 10 in Stevens Point (more on page 2) to hear Jennifer Block from the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy share more about sustainability initiatives and how U.S. dairy is poised to increase consumer confidence and build trust.

At the end of the day, U.S. dairy farmers are leading the conversation, reminding national leaders and critics that dairy is the environmental solution. Let's work together in stride as we achieve our environmental goals that make sense and work for everyone while we keep dairy farms economically sustainable. 🇺🇸

Article by Julie Sweney,
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative

NOVEMBER 2022

	UPPER MIDWEST	CENTRAL	MIDEAST	
Order Name and Number	Order 30	Order 32	Order 33	
Producer Milk (lbs.)	2,977,293,871	1,289,172,230	1,317,661,035	
Producer Price Differential @ base zone	\$ 0.29	\$ 1.27	\$ 1.74	
Statistical Uniform Price/cwt @ 3.5% BF*	\$ 21.30	\$ 22.28	\$ 22.75	
Class I Price/cwt	\$ 25.89	\$ 26.09	\$ 26.09	
Class II Price/cwt	\$ 24.67	\$ 24.67	\$ 24.67	
Class III Price/cwt	\$ 21.01	\$ 21.01	\$ 21.01	
Class IV Price/cwt	\$ 23.30	\$ 23.30	\$ 23.30	
Component Prices & Test Avg. % aves				
Butterfat/lb.	\$ 3.3720	4.25%	4.21%	4.11%
Protein/lb.	\$ 2.5374	3.31%	3.39%	3.30%
Other Solids/lb.	\$ 0.28370	5.78%	5.78%	5.77%
SCC Adjust Rate/1000	\$ 0.00104			
Producer Milk Classified %				
Class I	5.70%	29.34%	40.00%	
Class II	0.90%	5.75%	7.10%	
Class III	93.00%	55.74%	51.00%	
Class IV	0.40%	9.17%	1.90%	
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	



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Attend FarmFirst's Workshops on
Feb. 10 - More Info Inside!

Join Us for
**Happy
Hour**



Tuesday, March 28
4:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Denny Sanford Center
Hospitality Rooms 6 & 7



Enjoy a casual atmosphere with drinks and appetizers along with good camaraderie leading up to Tuesday's entertainment at 7 p.m.

Members will receive FarmFirst apparel.

