

# MILKLINE

NEWSLETTER



**FARM FIRST**  
DAIRY COOPERATIVE

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## Dairy Labeling Accuracy: Let's Be Real!



FarmFirst continued our resilient advocacy in the best interests of U.S. dairy farmers, by recently by making your case on the issue of dairy labeling. In late June, we submitted detailed comments to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in response to the FDA's draft guidance document titled "Labeling of Plant-Based Milk Alternatives and Voluntary Nutrient Statements: Guidance for Industry." The guidance document was issued on February 22, 2023, in the Federal Register with a July 31, 2023 deadline for comments.

In our submission, we made it clear that the FDA must enforce existing dairy labeling regulations and prioritize the clear differentiation between real dairy products and imitations or substitutes. While we expressed appreciation of FDA's efforts in the draft guidance document, we firmly believe that it is time to enforce the established

regulations and standards of identity for milk and dairy products. Consumers deserve clear and accurate information when making purchasing decisions. Enforcing dairy labeling requirements is essential to protect the interests of our dairy farmers and to maintain trust between producers and consumers.

We pointed out that terms such as "milk," "cheese," and "yogurt" have specific standards of identity and must be protected. Plant and nut-based products such as almond, soy, or rice extract misrepresent dairy products and are examples of mislabeled products which mislead consumers into thinking they are consuming dairy products or that plant and nut-based products have the same nutritional quality as milk and dairy products. In addition, we stressed that the word "imitation" should be required in the advertising and labeling of imitation milk, cheese, and other substitutes for dairy products. It is imperative that all food labels are required to be easily understood, and any claims should be supported by science in keeping with FDA's standards of identity. The FDA's guidance document includes a recommendation for voluntary nutrition statements on plant-based milk alternatives, which are nutritionally inferior to milk. However, we pointed out that voluntary labeling falls well short of the necessary enforcement required to effectively protect the dairy industry and consumers. We are pleased that the FDA guidance document does recognize the importance of milk and dairy in a

healthy diet, stating that milk and dairy products provide essential nutrients like calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, vitamin B-12, and more. The acknowledgment of these benefits further highlights the necessity of accurate dairy labeling, as plant-based products do not contain the equivalent of the nutrients in dairy products.

As the July 31 comment deadline approaches, it is crucial for producers to also voice their opinions and contribute to the ongoing discussion on dairy labeling. Together, we can get FDA to enforce its regulations to provide clarity and transparency, uphold the standards of identity for dairy products, and support the well-being of U.S. dairy farmers and consumers. 🐄

*Article by Jeff Lyon,  
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative*

To submit your comments on the guidance document, go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), search for Docket "FDA-2018-N-3522-0001," and click on the blue "Comment Now" box. You can either copy and paste your comments into the field provided or upload your comments.

You can read the comments submitted to FDA on our website at [https://www.farmfirstdairycooperative.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FDA-Guidance-Documernt-on-Milk-Labeling\\_June-2023.pdf](https://www.farmfirstdairycooperative.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FDA-Guidance-Documernt-on-Milk-Labeling_June-2023.pdf)

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.

## Your Dairy Checkoff at Work

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### TIME magazine features dairy cows as solution to food waste

The world-wide publication shared branded content from the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy highlighting dairy cows as the ultimate upcyclers, including quotes and insights from national checkoff scientists Juan Tricarico and Lori Captain and examples from Reinford Farms in Pennsylvania. In addition to highlighting the ways cows consume byproducts and keep byproducts out of landfills, the piece

also showcases how the dairy industry is maximizing impact to reduce methane emissions through research, on-farm pilots and partnerships across the country.

### Starbucks Features Dairy Farm Sustainability Stories

The coffee giant, a partner in the U.S. Dairy Net Zero Initiative, posted a story to the "Starbucks Stories" section of its website, providing an overview of its Sustainable Dairy Program in the U.S., with examples of working with farmers. The story features two dairy farmers and the on-farm practices contributing to a smaller carbon footprint. In 2020, Starbucks joined the U.S. Dairy Net Zero Initiative (NZI), a partnership of the U.S. dairy community working to accelerate industry-wide progress toward achieving greenhouse gas neutrality and improvements in water conservation and quality on farms. Starbucks has committed to invest \$10 million toward the research and implementation of new practices in feed production to manure management, nutrition and on-farm energy efficiency with the goal of providing farmers with technology and environmental practices. With over half of Starbucks beverages containing real dairy, this impact of this partnership continues to influence a large share of the market.

### UDIM Introduces New Chocolate Milk Grant

From 2011-2023, Milk Means More offered the Chocolate Milk: Nature's Sports Drink grant to Michigan High School Athletic Teams to refuel teams with chocolate milk and support overall growth and development of growing teens. The recent evolution of the Chocolate Milk Grant to a building-wide, multi-year approach will provide a more inclusive and sustainable opportunity to refuel ALL students after school: athletics, marching band, activities/clubs and more. The goal is to support students' growth and development, education, as well as all extracurricular activities.

### UDIM Works with Blue Cross Blue Shield to Provide Grants to Food Pantries

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, United Dairy Industry of Michigan and Blue Cross Complete of Michigan are proud to collaborate to address food and nutrition insecurity. This grant opportunity will provide refrigeration equipment and resources to Michigan's food pantries to support increasing access and distribution of dairy foods and other nutrient-rich fresh food options to clients. Our goal is that all clients visiting these pantries have access to healthy choices like milk, cheese, fruit, vegetables, yogurt and cottage cheese. 

Submitted by Jolene Griffin,  
United Dairy Industry of Michigan

visit us at  
[FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com](http://FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com)



## Payment Limits to be Reconsidered in Farm Bill

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, plans to attempt once again to reform the existing farm bill payment limits, seeking to tighten the amount of people eligible for the government's agricultural programs.

Speaking on Agri-Pulse Newsmakers, Grassley said he'll propose more restrictive payment limits in the upcoming reauthorization process, repeating similar efforts he's championed in previous bills.

"We got an issue where 10% of the biggest farmers are getting 70% of the benefits from the farm program," said Grassley. "And remember, the farm program was meant to be a safety net. And I think small- or medium-sized farmers need that safety net more than big farmers."

There's been a long history of debate around farm bill payment limits. Grassley said he anticipates southern agriculture won't support his proposal. However, he said fiscal conservatives and many Democrats are likely to be on board.

The farm bill currently caps payments for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage, for example, at \$125,000 per person or legal entity. Other limits exist for some other programs in the legislation.

Grassley's work on the topic has focused on defining who qualifies as a farm manager and limiting the number of farm managers who may receive farm payments.

Congress and the USDA have clarified payments can only go to those "actively engaged in farming," but the true definition of actively engaged remains a hotly-contested topic in many farm policy circles. USDA defines the term of someone who provides "significant contributions to the farming operation" such as "capital, land and/or equipment and active personal labor and/or active personal management."

Michael Lavender, policy director with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, told Agri-Pulse tighter payment limits would make the farm safety net more equitable.

"We can have a more responsible safety net and also look at expanding access to crop insurance for folks who have been historically underserved - young and beginning farmers, specialty crop farmers," Lavender said on Agri-Pulse Newsmakers. "It's important that we're building a safety net that represents the diversity of American agriculture, and we don't currently have that at this point in time."

Lavender said crop insurance specifically is skewed toward the largest and wealthiest producers in the country.

Bart Fischer is co-director of the Agricultural & Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University and previously worked on these issues during several farm bill reauthorizations as an economist for the House Agriculture Committee. Speaking on Newsmakers, Fischer said the payment limit discussion has been around for a long time.

"I think it's largely been there mainly for the most obvious reasons that Congress is interested in limiting the payments to certain individuals, given that that support does come from taxpayers," Fischer said.


Fischer said it's "probably past time" that legislators and policymakers took another look at payment limits, but perhaps for different reasons than those championed by Grassley, Lavender and others.

"As farm policy has moved more to risk management, I think the payment limit conversation really hasn't kept up," Fischer said. 

## FMMO Hearing Tentatively Set for August

USDA has tentatively set Aug. 23 as the date for a hearing to revise the Federal Milk Marketing Order system. Details are expected to be announced at a later date. The news comes after the National Milk Producers Federation submitted a proposal to modernize the FMMO system. Additional proposals were accepted through June 14, and USDA held a virtual pre-hearing information session on June 16. Following that session, modified proposals were due to be submitted by June 20. A formal hearing notice is to be published sometime in late July.

According to NMPF Chairman Randy Mooney, momentum for updating the FMMO system is a testament to the power of dairy farmers working through their cooperatives to undertake bold initiatives that advance their industry. He believes farmers will continue to lead as modernization moves forward.

"Dairy producers have proven throughout this process that, with unity and careful attention to each other's needs, we can achieve impressive things," he says. "Dairy's strength comes from its farms, and producers ready to face challenges and seize opportunities. We're excited to begin the formal hearing process." 




# FarmFirst Applauds Recommended Changes to Improve Dairy Margin Coverage Program



In June, Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Tina Smith (D-MN) sent a letter to the Senate Committee on Agriculture urging consideration for updates to the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) Program in the 2023 Farm Bill.

Act was introduced to make changes to the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program. This bipartisan supported bill would require USDA to update the production history calculation in the program every five years, and to be based on the producer's highest production year out of the last three years. If included in the 2023 Farm Bill, this provision would update the production history to that of the highest production year of 2020, 2021, and 2022. The bill also increases the Tier 1 threshold from five million pounds to six million pounds.

"The recommended enhancements submitted on the DMC Program are essential in ensuring that the program continues to work for producers," says Jeff Lyon, General Manager of FarmFirst. "Since the 2018 Farm Bill, the average herd size has increased, and an incremental increase in Tier I volume is needed. Additionally, the provisions in the Dairy Farm Resiliency Act are necessary for the program to work efficiently and effectively for dairy producers in the Upper Midwest. A consistent basis and increasing the Tier 1 Threshold to more accurately reflect how the average herd size has grown since will improve the DMC program and how it benefits dairy farmers."

FarmFirst thanks and commends Senators Klobuchar, Baldwin and Smith for their submission on updates to the DMC Program as well as Representatives Marc Molinaro (R-NY), Derrick Van Orden (R-WI), Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) for the introduction of the Dairy Resiliency Act. 

The DMC Program is a safety net program for dairy farmers, which is a risk-management tool that addresses changes in the margin between milk prices and feed costs, has become a beneficial tool for producers since its implementation in the 2018 Farm Bill.

The letter recommends that the production volume between Tier I and Tier II premiums be updated to reflect the growth in herd size, that producers be allowed to update their production history to 2022 levels for future DMC payments, and that the top DMC margin level be increased from \$9.50 to \$10.00 per hundredweight to reflect the increasing costs of non-feed inputs.

Not long after this letter was sent, the Dairy Farm Resiliency



FarmFirst Member Services Representatives were busy in June with school farm tours, dairy breakfasts and robot training

## Senate Introduces Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act



The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act (S.1957 and H.R. 1147) was recently introduced to amend the federal school lunch program guidelines to allow unflavored and flavored whole milk to be offered in school cafeterias.

The bill would expand healthy milk options in schools to improve students' nutrition intake as a critical step toward improving child health. The bill would require schools to include "whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, and fat-free" milk as options in the National School Lunch program, and to exempt milk from USDA saturated fat limits. Current law requires flavored milk in

schools must be fat-free, though schools may seek a waiver to offer low-fat (1%) flavored milk.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans reports that nearly 90 percent of Americans do not meet their daily dairy intake recommendations. Additionally, leading nutritionists have found that whole dairy fats have no negative effect on a diet and may even reduce risk of heart disease.

The National Milk Producers Federation and FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative support the legislation.

"We applaud all the bill sponsors and cosponsors for working to ensure all students have access to the healthy milk options that they will choose to drink. Most children and adolescents do not meet their daily dairy recommendations. This is a nutrition problem for our country's youth because they are not taking in dairy's unique nutritional profile, which includes 13 essential nutrients. By expanding the options in school meal programs to include the most popular varieties of nutritious milk, discouraging food waste, and encouraging better nutrition, the bipartisan Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act provides a commonsense solution that increases schools' ability to choose milk varieties that best meet their students' nutritional needs." Jim Mulhern, President, and CEO of National Milk Producers Federation said.

"We fully support the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023 as it addresses long-time policy priorities of FarmFirst members," said John Rettler, dairy farmer and FarmFirst board president. "Our policies support requiring all schools to offer milk, from whole milk to fat free, including flavored milk as a choice to all students since milk provides the necessary nutritional requirements of a healthy diet." 🇺🇸



***FarmFirst Field Representative, Rick Wolfe, recently made a delivery to Manawa, WI. FarmFirst member, Kendell Zemple, was the lucky winner of the IH 1466 1/16th tractor from our drawing at WPS Farm Show this year. He is pictured here with his father, Ronald. Congratulations Kendell!***

***Be sure to stop by the FarmFirst booth at Farm Technology Days in Baraboo for your chance to win a JD 4620 1/16th tractor or a FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative chair!***



# MAY 2023

	UPPER MIDWEST	CENTRAL	MIDEAST
Order Name and Number	Order 30	Order 32	Order 33
Producer Milk (lbs.)	2,790,582,019	1,359,161,698	1,563,472,578
Producer Price Differential @ base zone	\$ 0.38	\$ 1.63	\$ 2.10
Statistical Uniform Price/cwt @ 3.5% BF*	\$ 16.49	\$ 17.74	\$ 18.21
Class I Price/cwt	\$ 21.37	\$ 21.57	\$ 21.57
Class II Price/cwt	\$ 19.11	\$ 19.11	\$ 19.11
Class III Price/cwt	\$ 16.11	\$ 16.11	\$ 16.11
Class IV Price/cwt	\$ 18.10	\$ 18.10	\$ 18.10
<b>Component Prices &amp; Test Avg. % aves</b>			
Butterfat/lb.	\$ 2.7572	4.24%	4.00%
Protein/lb.	\$ 1.8002	3.23%	3.19%
Other Solids/lb.	\$ 0.18770	5.79%	5.79%
SCC Adjust Rate/1000	\$ 0.00083		
<b>Producer Milk Classified %</b>			
Class I	5.80%	26.16%	32.90%
Class II	1.10%	6.57%	6.10%
Class III	92.40%	53.20%	49.20%
Class IV	0.70%	14.07%	11.80%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



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**Pam Jahnke, Fabulous Farm Babe, will be LIVE at the FarmFirst Booth on Wednesday, July 19th at 9am!**

**BARABOO 2023**  
**WISCONSIN FARM TECHNOLOGY DAYS**  
*Full Steam Ahead*  
**July 18-20, 2023**

