

MILKLINE

NEWSLETTER



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What's Your Story?



June marks the beginning of summer, with warmer temperatures, more hours of daylight, kids home from school, and the smell of fresh cut hay. It is also a special time of year for the dairy industry, as we celebrate June Dairy Month.

June Dairy Month was first established as National Milk Month in 1937 by grocer organizations as a means to promote drinking milk during the summer months, when there was typically a production surplus. Now known as June Dairy Month, this celebration is intended to thank dairy producers for their contribution to the global food system, promote the consumption of dairy products and inform consumers of the nutritional value that dairy provides. It is also an opportunity to take advantage of this spotlight on dairy to share the stories

of the dairy farm families that are the foundation of the industry.

Today, the average American consumer is three generations removed from the farm, and less than two percent of the population is directly involved in agriculture.

Consumers drive food trends, and they want to know where their food is coming from. We also live in a time where too many people look to social media or the internet for their information, regardless of its accuracy. We have all heard the myths that are being circulated such as "Milk is full of hormones and antibiotics," "It's cruel to take a calf away from its mother," "Cows should not be kept inside of a barn," "Dairy Cattle are mistreated," or "Dairy farms are bad for the environment." Unfortunately, the meaning behind the popular phrase, "I read it on the internet so it must be true," plays a part in this misinformation.

In addition to myths about how farmers care for their animals, their land and about how milk is produced, there are general misunderstandings about where dairy products come from. For example, a survey that was done by The Innovation Center of US Dairy showed that seven percent of American adults from across all 50 states believe that chocolate milk comes from brown cows. That goes to show us just how

uninformed some consumers are about where their food truly comes from.

Also remember, it's always possible that your neighbor down the road may

"Today, the average American consumer is three generations removed from the farm, and less than two percent of the population is directly involved in agriculture"

know just as little about dairy farming as someone living in the middle of a big city.

FarmFirst is committed to advocating for our members by representing you in efforts to educate the public. We provide sponsorships for various dairy breakfasts and June Dairy Month events which draw the public in to learn first-hand about the industry. In addition, your dairy checkoff dollars whether at the national, regional, state, or local level are being used to provide your voice to consumers and drive trust in the dairy industry. In addition to promoting dairy products and consumption, the checkoff funds programs aimed at protecting the image of dairy farmers and building trust in the industry with consumers. This is done by experienced staff who are diligent in being on the leading edge of product research, social media, consumer and market research, social media, marketing, promotion and more.

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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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Cooperative Happenings

Dairy Education Resource Center - Federal Milk Modernization Order Videos



The Dairy Education Resource Center is an online learning platform focused on understanding the various dairy-related programs administered by AMS-Dairy Program. The site provides videos containing educational videos on Federal Milk Marketing Orders, which are helpful in understanding the orders especially at a time when we are looking at FMMO Modernization. These videos can be viewed online

at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/programs-offices/dairy-program/dairy-education-resource-center>

FarmFirst Endorses The Farmers First Act of 2023

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative, along with other members of the Midwest Dairy Coalition, endorsed The Farmers First Act of 2023 that was introduced by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Joni Ernst (R-IA). This bill builds off of the bipartisan 2018 legislation which provided seed funding through USDA to reestablish the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network.

In the 2018 Farm Bill, Senators Baldwin and Ernst led the effort to respond to the mental health crisis among agricultural workers, who experience higher rates of death by suicide. To assist these farmers in crisis, their bipartisan legislation provided seed funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture to reestablish the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN), a program that supports a service provider network connecting farmers, ranchers, and other agriculture workers to stress assistance programs and resources. Through FRSAN, state departments of agriculture, state extension services, and non-profits received funding to establish helplines, provide suicide prevention training for farm advocates, and create support groups.

"FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative greatly appreciates the work of Senators Baldwin and Ernst in addressing the mounting mental health crisis within the agricultural community," said Jeff Lyon, General Manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. "Farmers are particularly at risk for stress related mental health issues due to many unpredictable factors within their profession, and the issue is compounded by limited access to mental health care in rural areas. The Farmers First Act will help to expand the resources that farmers may need in times of crisis."

A Morning Consult poll found that during 2021, most farmers and farm workers (61%) and rural adults (52%) reported experiencing more stress and mental health challenges compared to the prior year. The same poll also found that while stigma around seeking help or treatment for mental health has decreased, it remains a factor, especially in agriculture.

The Farmers First Act of 2023 increases funding for the program to \$15 million per year through 2028. Funding for this critical program has supported the expansion of telephone helplines and hotlines; training programs to increase mental health literacy and stress management among agricultural producers and individuals engaged in other agricultural occupations; and support groups for farmworkers.

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NMPF Submits Milk-Pricing Plan to USDA - Moving FMMO Modernization Forward



On May 1st, The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) submitted to USDA its comprehensive proposal for modernizing the Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) system, the product of two years of examination and more than

150 meetings held to build consensus behind updates to a program that last saw significant changes in 2000.

“Dairy farmers and their cooperatives need a modernized Federal Milk Marketing Order system that works better for producers,” said NMPF President and CEO Jim Mulhern. “By updating the pricing formulas to better reflect the value of the high-quality products made from farmers’ milk, by rebalancing pricing risks that have shifted unfairly onto farmers, and by creating a pathway to better reflect processing costs going forward, we are excited to submit this plan as a path toward a brighter future for dairy.”

Upon official acceptance, USDA will have 30 days to review the plan and decide whether and how to move forward with a federal order hearing to review the plan. Highlights include:

- Updating dairy product manufacturing allowances (the “make allowance”) contained in the USDA milk price formulas;
- Discontinuing the use of barrel cheese in the protein component price formula;
- Returning to the “higher of” Class I mover;
- Updating milk component factors for protein, other solids and nonfat solids in the Class III and Class IV skim milk price formulas; and
- Updating the Class I differential price system to reflect changes in the cost of delivering bulk milk to fluid processing plants.

NMPF will pursue two other components of its Federal Order proposal, approved unanimously by the organization’s Board of Directors in March, outside of the federal-order hearing process, as they don’t involve changing federal order regulations. The recommendations, which remain essential parts of NMPF’s modernization plan, are:

- Extending the current 30-day reporting limit to 45 days on forward priced sales on nonfat dry milk and dry whey to capture more exports sales in the USDA product price reporting, which can be implemented through federal rulemaking; and
- Developing legislative language for the farm bill to ensure the make allowance is regularly reviewed by directing USDA to conduct mandatory plant-cost studies every two years.

Mulhern urged USDA to grant a hearing on the entire NMPF proposal, noting how the effectiveness of some components are dependent on the inclusion of others. Mulhern also thanked other organizations that have helped NMPF forge necessary producer consensus by sharing views and insights throughout the process,

saying that spirit of unity and good-faith discussion will help FMMO modernization move forward more quickly.

“From state and regional dairy associations to the American Farm Bureau Federation, dairy farmers have had many allies and friends throughout this process,” Mulhern said. “As Secretary Vilsack has stated, consensus is necessary to successful modernization. We have that producer consensus, and we look forward to working together toward adoption and implementation of our plan.

On May 3, FarmFirst submitted a letter to USDA asking that all of the changes being proposed by NMPF be included as part of the national FMMO hearing. 🐄

FDA Reopens Comment Period on Dairy Labeling Guidance

FDA has reopened the comment period for the draft guidance entitled “Labeling of Plant-Based Milk Alternatives and Voluntary Nutrient Statements; Draft Guidance for Industry” that appeared in the Federal Register on Feb. 23. The new deadline for comments is July 31, 2023.

FDA has reopened the comment period in response to requests from stakeholders to allow additional time for interested persons to develop and submit comments.

In February, FDA issued for comment draft guidance to help ensure appropriate labeling of plant-based products that are marketed and sold as alternatives to milk (plant-based milk alternatives, or PBMA). This draft guidance will provide industry with recommendations that will result in clear labeling to empower consumers with information to help them make more informed purchasing decisions, says FDA. It also clarifies that the common or usual names of some PBMA have been established by common usage, and these names include “soy milk” and “almond milk.”

The FDA recommends that PBMA products that are labeled with the term “milk” in their names, such as “soy milk” or “almond milk,” and that have a nutrient composition that is different than milk, include a voluntary nutrient statement that conveys how the product compares with milk based on USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) fluid milk substitutes nutrient criteria. These statements will help consumers make informed dietary choices when it comes to understanding certain nutritional differences between plant-based products that are labeled with “milk” in their names and milk, says FDA.

If a PBMA is not labeled with “milk” as part of its name, but instead is labeled with another term like “beverage” or “drink” and does not make a claim comparing the product to milk, then the voluntary nutrient statement recommendations in the draft guidance do not apply.

Comments can be submitted to Regulations.gov and identified with the docket number FDA-2023-D-0451. 🐄

What's Your Story? *Continued from Page 1*

But it's not just up to organizations to share the dairy story. Attending June Dairy Month activities or dairy breakfasts are perfect opportunities to interact with consumers. Inviting small groups to tour your farm or creating a social media page or website are some other options for telling your story and providing the public with a better understanding of what you do. However, just having a simple conversation with someone about your operation and how you care for your animals and your land, how your children are involved on the farm, and sharing your passion for what you do can give someone a much better understanding of how much hard work and extreme care is put into producing quality, nutritious, healthy food for their consumption.

As dairy farmers, you are the cornerstone of agriculture in America. You contribute to your local economies, provide jobs, are stewards of the land, and produce products that play an important role in a healthy and balanced diet. Your story is invaluable and is worth sharing - regardless of how you decide to share it.

This June Dairy Month, we thank you for your never-ending hard work and dedication to what you do, and for creating the positive stories on your farms that consumers need to hear.



*Article by Sarah Sarbacker
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative*

Get to Know your Board of Directors: Michelle Popp, District 7



Name: Michelle Popp
Location: Unity, Wis.
Board Member Since: 2023

Michelle Popp is one of the newest faces on our Board of Directors, joining the board earlier this year. She and her husband Gary have a dairy farm on 98 owned acres, with


an additional 80 acres of rented land. They rotational graze their 25 registered Jersey cows, and 50 heifers and calves, and as their cows give a2a2 milk, they end up selling a lot of family cows in addition to selling to large parlor and robot farms. Michelle's involvement on the farm includes everything from milking and driving skid steer to feeding calves and recordkeeping. Her husband is an AI technician for Central Star, so he manages their breeding program and helps with chores when he is not working off of the farm.

Michelle wanted to diversify the operation, so she started a small farm-based business where she makes natural lotions from their milk. She has always enjoyed sharing the story of agriculture, so this allows her to share her story and provide a unique product made from the milk she produces. Her products are sold in small shops in the central Wisconsin area and one store in Alexandria, Minnesota. She just opened an Etsy shop, JerseyGirlsWI, so that people from all areas can purchase her products, and also has a Facebook page for her business where she shares more about her farm and diversified farm-based business.

Michelle was originally a Manitowoc Milk Producer member, which merged into FarmFirst Dairy

Cooperative. She believes that the services that FarmFirst provides its members are important for producers, including the Milk Loss Benefit program is a service that most cooperatives do not provide.

She was a delegate for several years for the cooperative, and wanted to become even more involved, so she ran for a director position. In early 2023, she was elected to the Board of Directors for District 7, which represents all of Clark County, Wisconsin. Michelle is excited to continue in her role on the board and is looking forward to learning more about the cooperative and helping it move forward into the future through being involved in the decision-making process, as well as really listening to the needs of members.

Michelle is proud to be a member of a cooperative that really cares about and advocates for its members, and that is why she is involved with FarmFirst. 



Announcing 2023 Scholarship Recipients

In its eleventh year of the program, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is proud to announce its 2023 scholarship award recipients. This year continues the tradition of significant support made by the cooperative for members' children, awarding \$18,000 to 17 applicants this year. In total, \$226,000 has been given to 241 students since 2013. Scholarship recipients were selected based on leadership, scholastic achievement, and extracurricular activities in addition to essay responses and their future career goals. **Congratulations to the 2023 FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Scholarship Award recipients!** 🎉



Abigail Ballweg
Dane, WI



Delaney Becker
Auburndale, WI



Rachel Boehlke
Thorp, WI



Magen Busker
Ridott, IL



Camron Cafferty
Elroy, WI



Grace Clark
Rosendale, WI



Wyatt Davis
Darlington, WI



Trinity Gruenenfelder
Blanchardville, WI



Sadie Heath
Tony, WI



Jake Hoefler
New Vienna, IA



Grace Leis
Cashton, WI



Brianna Meyer
Chilton, WI



Brooke Rudolph
Medford, WI



Brady Strassburg
Marion, WI



Brice Thiel
Auburndale, WI



Katelyn Welgraven
Ruthton, MN



Connor Weltzien
Arcadia, WI

FARM FIRST
DAIRY COOPERATIVE

APRIL 2023

Federal Milk Order
Market Information

	UPPER MIDWEST	CENTRAL	MIDEAST	
Order Name and Number	Order 30	Order 32	Order 33	
Producer Milk (lbs.)	2,447,300,376	1,471,416,101	1,634,857,034	
Producer Price Differential @ base zone	\$ 0.12	\$ (0.07)	\$ 0.44	
Statistical Uniform Price/cwt @ 3.5% BF*	\$ 18.64	\$ 18.45	\$ 18.96	
Class I Price/cwt	\$ 20.65	\$ 20.85	\$ 20.85	
Class II Price/cwt	\$ 19.20	\$ 19.20	\$ 19.20	
Class III Price/cwt	\$ 18.52	\$ 18.52	\$ 18.52	
Class IV Price/cwt	\$ 17.95	\$ 17.95	\$ 17.95	
Component Prices & Test Avg. % aves				
Butterfat/lb.	\$ 2.7009	4.19%	4.09%	4.05%
Protein/lb.	\$ 2.5603	3.22%	3.30%	3.22%
Other Solids/lb.	\$ 0.2479	5.80%	5.80%	5.79%
SCC Adjust Rate/1000	\$ 0.00094			
Producer Milk Classified %				
Class I	7.70%	23.67%	29.90%	
Class II	1.20%	6.84%	9.40%	
Class III	90.50%	42.65%	44.40%	
Class IV	0.60%	26.84%	16.30%	
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	



P.O. Box 14380
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**FarmFirst 2023 Scholarship
Recipients Announced!**

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, July 18-20, 2023 in Baraboo!
Find us at the FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative booth in the Blue Tent on the grounds!

