

Fall 2025

the
Voice of Milk

A leading force in dairy advocacy.

Connector



Bill and Raynelle Mueller on their farm,
Silver Crest Holsteins, in Big Stone City, SD.

What's Inside

*From the parlor to the
plant, dairy in South
Dakota aligns for success*

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Standing strong in our mission as the Voice of Milk

In today's political environment, there's a sense of uncertainty and unpredictability, which can make people feel uneasy and rightfully so. Political decisions can hold a lot of weight. They can impact not just legislation but also the livelihoods of many individuals and families, including those in agriculture.

As the leadership of the Voice of Milk organizations, we remain committed to upholding the best interests of the dairy community, no matter the political landscape. We understand the complexities and challenges that the dairy community faces, and we work to ensure our voices are heard and represented at the local, state and federal levels of government.

By working together and sharing our stories, we strive to bridge the gap between agriculture and policymakers. Through connection and collaboration, we form partnerships that help advance our mission.

United on priorities that support farms of all sizes and throughout the supply chain, the Voice of Milk and its members are powerful leaders of legislative wins. We drive the policies that move dairy farmers forward nationwide.

We are here for you. Our commitment to the dairy community remains steadfast, regardless of what the political circumstances might bring.

Heidi Fischer, *president, Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative*

Greg Siegenthaler, *president, Dairy Business Association*

Garrett Luthens, *president, Minnesota Milk Producers Association*

DBA launches redesigned website, featuring new resources for members



We're excited to unveil our redesigned website for the Dairy Business Association at dairyforward.com. We encourage you to check out the new and engaging features available. The site offers a more streamlined user experience and acts as an important resource for members.

With the launch of the newly designed website, DBA members now have access to the new DBA member portal. In this portal, you can access exclusive member-only content, including important resources, links to past webinars, policy updates and other information that may affect your farm. Additionally, you can view your membership status and submit requests to update your membership profile.

If you have not logged in to your new DBA member profile account yet, please look for a password reset email in your inbox. You need to reset your password in order to log in.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us at info@voiceofmilk.com

Stay tuned for a newly designed Minnesota Milk website coming early fall!

You're invited!

Member Appreciation Reception at World Dairy Expo

Wednesday, Oct. 1

5:00 - 7:00pm

Spark by Hilton Madison Central
Previously known as the Clarion

From the parlor to the plant, dairy in South Dakota aligns for success

30 years of dairy transformation within the Mount Rushmore State

By Rachel Malcore, Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative

In 1929, Swiss immigrants Alfred Nef and Alfred Gonzenbach opened a cheese processing plant in Milbank, South Dakota. As luck would have it, Gonzenbach was heading to Montana with the intention of starting a cheese plant there for the pair of friends but stopped at a gas station in Milbank. A local businessman quickly called the mayor and others in town to convince them the location would be ideal for their factory. Little did they know that Valley Queen Cheese would continue to be a leading processing plant in the region 96 years later, despite facing various industry setbacks and challenges along the way.

Over the last 30 years, the I-29 corridor has seen a significant surge in milk production, enabling regional growth in dairy processing plants and boosting a variety of other industries involved in the dairies, such as trucking and transportation, feed mills, suppliers and on-farm services.

Valley Queen has adapted to meet the increase in production and has undergone two major expansions over the last several years, starting in 2019 and most recently in 2025, which doubled their processing capacity from 4 million pounds of milk per day to 8 million pounds. The cheese plant currently works with 39 area farms, totaling around 95,000 cows.



Doug Wilke, Valley Queen CEO, talking with Edge team members.

“We’ve had the awesome opportunity to take advantage of the growing milk supply in South Dakota,” Doug Wilke, Valley Queen CEO, said. “The Alfreds landed here by chance, and today we now have this tremendous milk supply in the I-29 corridor, and it’s growing. We’ve been fortunate to have enough customer demand to take advantage of it.”

South Dakota’s friendly business climate with no corporate tax has made it an easy place to do business, but Valley Queen credits its growth to the alignment of three key factors: customer demand, shareholder investment and investment at the farm level.

“It takes three entities working together – customers, shareholders and farmers – to achieve growth in the dairy industry,” Wilke said. “Managed growth has been critical for us. It involves working with our customers and ensuring they have opportunities to market and grow,

and we want our farmer base to be innovative, efficient and expanding too.”

South Dakota dairy’s downward trend

The thriving dairy industry in South Dakota we see today did not always exist. Cow numbers reached a low point in the 1980s and 1990s, with young farmers leaving the area to move to bigger cities and others retiring.

In the early 1990s, Bill and Raynelle Mueller from Big Stone City struggled to find a supportive lender to help them start their dairy farm.



Bill and Raynelle Mueller on their farm in Big Stone City, SD.

“We went to all the bankers in the area trying to find money, and we finally found one who would go with us,” Bill said. “You’d be surprised how many bankers thought we were nuts.”

The Muellers have a small, registered Holstein herd that has

been recognized as a leading herd among the Holstein Association. They have been shipping their farm's milk to Valley Queen since they first started their farm and can remember a time when the plant implemented incentives to reward new farmers.

"We were one of the last producers that Valley Queen gave a bonus to for starting up a new operation," Bill said. "We put that money toward building a feed room for the farm."

From decline to recovery: Recruitment efforts lead to farmer growth in the 2000s

Processors were concerned about the need for increased milk production, which underscored a clear need for change to revitalize dairy farming in the state. Fortunately, many key leaders recognized the region's significant potential for growth, and strategies for development emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

South Dakota's Secretary of Agriculture from 2000 to 2007, Larry Gabriel, identified dairy as the commodity with the greatest potential to revive the area's economy and launched a campaign to recruit new farms to the state.

Roger Scheibe was hired to recruit dairy farmers from other states and countries, including the Netherlands, where they faced potential barriers in their current location and lacked opportunities for growth.

"I ran ads in newspapers throughout the United States, the

Netherlands and Canada," Scheibe said. "[Edge members] Wim and Nicolien Hammink who were one of the first farmers to immigrate from the Netherlands to South Dakota helped with translations. I also traveled overseas and met with farmers."



Roger Scheibe, experienced dairy leader and former dairy farmer recruiter.

Scheibe set up tours for farmers to visit

the region, and for every 10 to 15 people on the tour, one or two would be interested in making the trip over, he recalls.

Over that period, more than 15 international dairy owners immigrated to South Dakota.

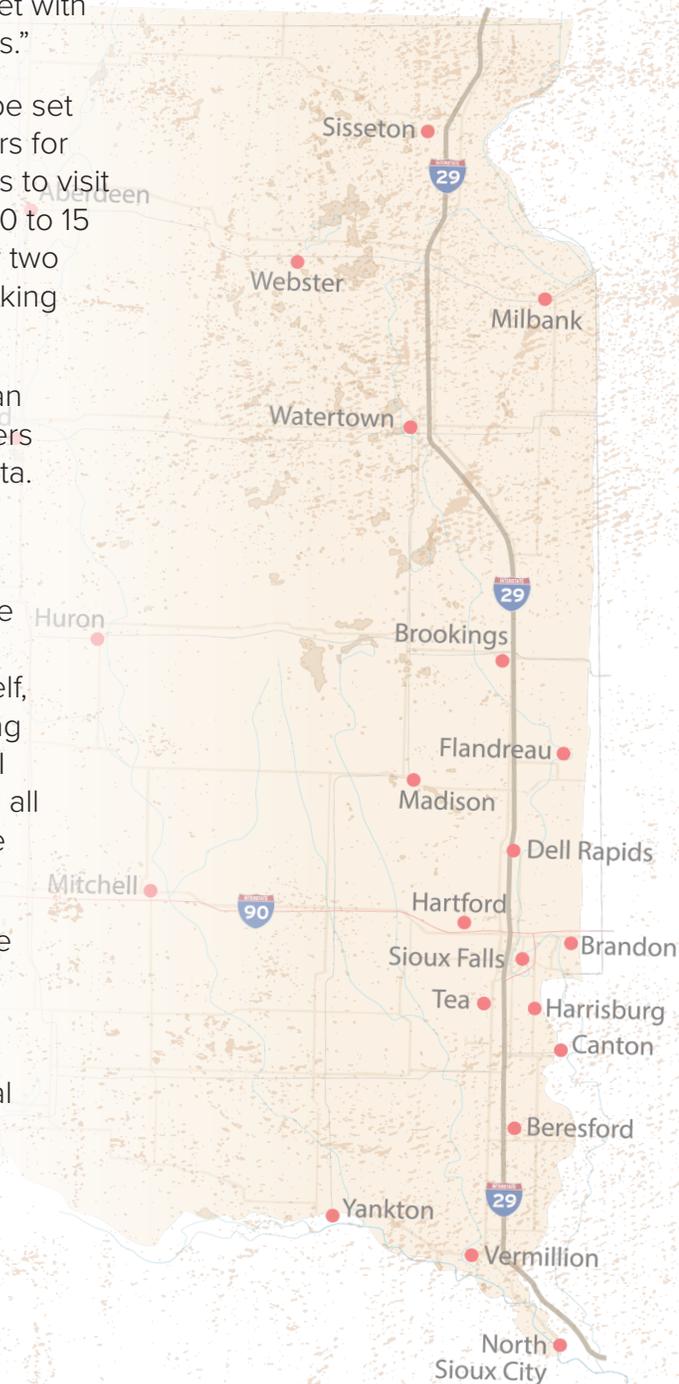
"I recruited all these dairy farmers in and got the ball rolling, and then from there it took on a life of its own," he said. "I thought to myself, I might have to start looking for something else. Then, I became an ag lender, and all my customers became the dairy farmers I brought in."

While now retired, Scheibe still remains bonded to farmers he helped bring to the region. He also became one of the original organizers of the Central Plains Expo.

"When I recruited dairy farmers, especially those from overseas, they put their trust in me and that

bond between us will always be there," he said.

Other long-time dairy champions, including South Dakota Representative Tim Czmowski, who has spent over 44 years in the industry, have also been instrumental in developing the region's dairy community. He's been involved in the development



of numerous area processors, including Agropur and Valley Queen, and is now the founder of CheeseWorld, LLC.

“As a team lead on Agropur’s milk development group, our goal when we initially formed was to encourage growth and build dairy back to where it once had been in South Dakota, but we’ve far surpassed that,” Rep. Czmowski said.

A continued bright future for the I-29 milk corridor

Dairy in South Dakota and the nearby areas along the I-29 corridor have gained significant momentum and fostered a community built on connection and camaraderie.

Central Plains Dairy Expo, an annual event that started in a room with only 10 to 15 vendors, now attracts over 4,000 dairy-focused individuals from multiple states, representing the area’s growth

and community building.

Edge member Lynn Boadwine of Moody County Dairy came up with the idea for the expo over 20 years ago.



Lynn Boadwine of Moody County Dairy in Sherman, SD.

“I wanted to create an event that would bring together this industry and grow the pool of producers in our community,” Boadwine said. “And, not only that, but also show vendors and suppliers that South Dakota is an impactful dairy state.”

The red-carpet recruitment and expo to match helped bolster the growth. However, farmers also need additional infrastructure and resources to support their relocation or growth. South Dakota State University recognized this gap and stepped in with specialized milk processing training.



Davis Dairy Plant of South Dakota State University.

The Davis Dairy Plant of South Dakota State University processes about 15,000 pounds of milk per week. It’s utilized for research purposes, helping area processors test new products or equipment. It also serves as an excellent training experience for college students, encouraging them to explore career opportunities in the state’s dairy job market.

With community alignment and various growth factors, the future of dairy in South Dakota looks promising.

“It goes to show that a lot of good people working together toward a common goal can really move mountains,” Rep. Czmowski said. “Our processors and farmers, government support, and all those who contribute, such as farm equipment sales, veterinarians and others, all joined in the effort to make the I-29 corridor the milk corridor.”

And it doesn’t end there.

“There’s a lot of good activity and the window of opportunity won’t stay open forever,” Wilke said. “It’s important for producers, processors and customers to take advantage and shape it because at some point it’ll close, but it feels like it’s going to stay open for a while.”

The growth potential for the dairy industry still exists in the I-29 corridor.

“I think dairy in South Dakota and the surrounding areas has a continued bright future for dairy,” Rep. Czmowski said. “Why not have this region be a major player in the supply of global dairy products?”



Toasted grilled cheese, warm sun and great golf create memories and support for members

This summer, DBA and MN Milk members and friends took to the links in their annual golf outings to support the organizations and spend a day with friends and colleagues.

Held on July 29, the DBA Dairy Classic was held at the Green Bay Packers exclusive club, Thornberry Creek. The beautiful course provided a challenging day for the golfers but an exciting opportunity to play at the club. Over 100 DBA members and supporters participated in the event which included prizes, sponsor

giveaways, food and drinks.

The 2026 DBA Dairy Classic will be held at Lake Arrowhead Golf Course. Watch for registration for this event next spring.

MN Milk held its annual MN Milk Cup on August 13 at Mt. Frontenac, and it was a great day all around! After a fun day of golfing, everyone enjoyed a delicious steak dinner, a bag toss competition and fun raffle prizes thanks to our generous sponsors. Thanks to everyone who came out and made it such a great event.

Looking ahead, next year's MN Milk Cup will take place in Sauk Centre.

We hope you enjoyed the course and valued the connections made with friends and colleagues. Your continued support of DBA and MN Milk and participation in events helps unite and strengthen the dairy community. We appreciate your ongoing commitment—both on and off the greens! 🏌️‍♂️



Congress returns to D.C. following a busy August in their Districts



Karen Gefvert
Chief policy officer

August meant that Congress went home to their district for their annual recess. The break gave members of Congress an opportunity to leave

Washington, D.C. and reconnect with their constituents. For some, they visited state fairs or hosted ag roundtable events to talk about the latest ag issues, and for others, they got out to farms and businesses like yours to connect with farmers and business owners about the impact of Washington's policies. They like connecting with you and hearing about your farms. Any of these events are great opportunities to engage with members of Congress and share your personal stories and advocate for Edge's policy priorities.

Do farm events impact policy?

On-farm events and tours during August recess give lawmakers a chance to see beyond talking points and statistics—they experience firsthand the realities of running a dairy farm. When members of Congress walk through a milking parlor, talk with employees, or see the investment in technology and sustainability practices, the challenges and opportunities facing farmers become tangible. These visits put a human face on policy

discussions, whether it's the urgent need for a reliable workforce, fair trade opportunities, or regulatory flexibility.

When groups collaborate and ask farmers to host and/or participate in ag roundtable events, there are generally policy items that we all convene around. Having a gathering where policymakers and farmers sit down together provides a powerful platform to share your story, advocate for better policies and highlight successes.

By grounding complex policy issues in real-world experiences like farm tours and agriculture events, we all help shape the conversations lawmakers carry back to Washington, ensuring agriculture's voice is stronger in the months ahead.

Issues on the horizon

Annual recess is more than casual conversations—it's about making sure your priorities stay front and center as lawmakers gear up for a busy fall. Two of the biggest issues Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative is driving forward are ag labor reform and the next phase of the farm bill.

Ag labor reform

Labor on dairy farms is mostly filled by immigrant labor, but the current visa system doesn't meet the needs of year-round agriculture. The outdated H-2A visa program excludes dairy, leaving many farmers without a secure, reliable

way to hire and retain workers. Edge has been advocating for a two-pronged approach to secure a reliable workforce visa program for dairy. First, updating the H-2A program to expand from seasonal to year-round labor, including dairy in the eligible sectors to utilize the visa and make improvements to streamline the application and response time. Second is advocating for a stand-alone, multi-year, renewable visa program for the entry-level workforce for dairy and other year-round agricultural operations. Either visa program would provide stability for the dairy workforce moving forward.

As lawmakers return to Washington, D.C. in September, the labor debate will be front and center. Edge will continue to push for solutions that recognize the essential role foreign-born labor plays in keeping our dairy farms strong.

Farm Bill 2.0

The portions of the farm bill that passed within the One Big Beautiful Bill Act earlier this year signified a historic milestone, but not all the work is done. As dairy farmers, you need programs that support risk management and surety in your business structure. Edge's efforts to include our Accurate & Timely Payments policy are still in a full-court-press. Providing farmers with a reliable timeline for when you will be paid, as well as ensuring third-party verification of milk testing, is

essential to standardizing industry practices. In addition, Edge is also actively working with Congress to include the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, extension of the Dairy Forward Pricing Program, as well as several other programs in the farm bill to ensure dairy voices are represented as agencies finalize rules and as lawmakers consider follow-up legislation.

As Congress prepares to dive back into a packed fall agenda, the progress made on labor reform and the farm bill will set the stage for broader debates on agriculture, trade, and regulation—making it more important than ever for dairy farmers to stay engaged and keep these priorities front and center.

What to expect in September

When Congress reconvenes after Labor Day, there will be a number of high-priority policy issues facing them. Among the top priorities:

- Budget deadlines and potential funding debates
- Continued negotiations over immigration and workforce legislation
- Farm bill 2.0 package
- Implementation and impact on trade and tariff rates

This means the input we had in August will have added value. But advocacy conversations can happen regularly, and we encourage you to reach

out to your member of Congress to discuss the issues you are facing. You are an essential part of the process to influence what members do in Washington, D.C.

How can you engage with members of Congress?

Your story matters more than you may think. Lawmakers often say that the most memorable and persuasive messages they hear come directly from farmers. Here are a few ways to engage:

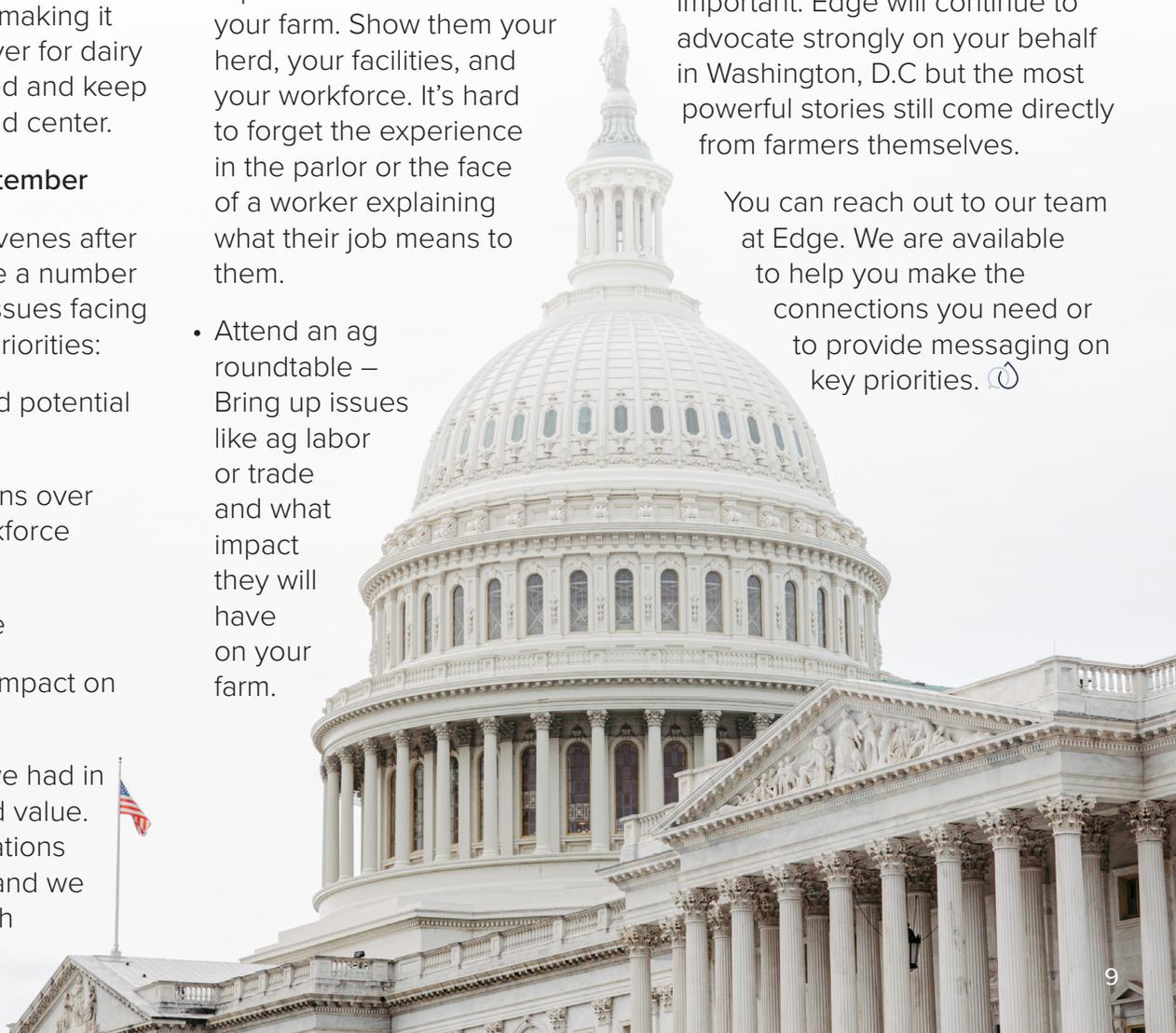
- Host a visit – Invite your representative or senator to your farm. Show them your herd, your facilities, and your workforce. It's hard to forget the experience in the parlor or the face of a worker explaining what their job means to them.
- Attend an ag roundtable – Bring up issues like ag labor or trade and what impact they will have on your farm.

- Write a short note or email or make a phone call – Keep it personal and focused on one or two key issues. Share how federal policy affects your farm.

The bottom line

By hosting a farm visit, speaking up at a roundtable, or simply sending a note, you can make sure lawmakers understand the challenges you face and the solutions you support. This year, with ag labor reform, farm bill 2.0 and trade policy all on the table, your voice is especially important. Edge will continue to advocate strongly on your behalf in Washington, D.C but the most powerful stories still come directly from farmers themselves.

You can reach out to our team at Edge. We are available to help you make the connections you need or to provide messaging on key priorities. [📞](#)



Wisconsin adopts 2025-27 budget with bipartisan backing and major investments in education, agriculture and infrastructure

Two-year spending plan reflects bipartisan compromise and dairy sector priorities



Chad Zuleger
DBA executive
director

In early July, Wisconsin officially adopted its 2025–27 biennial budget — a comprehensive plan shaped by months of hearings, negotiations,

and public input. This budget cycle was influenced in large part by federal policy shifts, including major agriculture-related funding opportunities that followed the passage of landmark legislation signed by President Donald Trump. These federal priorities helped shape the state’s fiscal approach, particularly in areas that support Wisconsin’s dairy industry.

Governor Tony Evers signed the more than \$110 billion two-year spending plan into law with the backing of both Republican and Democratic leaders, including Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu. While the budget earned notable bipartisan support, it also drew opposition from members of both parties over

specific provisions — a reflection of the varied priorities of Wisconsin’s citizens and their representatives.

The budget includes broad tax relief and increases for public K–12 schools, higher education, and Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospitals. But for Wisconsin’s dairy producers, some of the most important wins are found in agriculture-specific programs and rural infrastructure investments.

Transportation and workforce development received a substantial boost aimed squarely at supporting the state’s agricultural backbone. The Agriculture Road Improvement Program (ARIP) was renewed and will continue to direct resources toward modernizing rural roads essential for moving milk and feed, while expanded commercial driver’s license (CDL) training programs will help address trucking shortages that have strained farm-to-processor supply chains.

Water quality and land stewardship also remain at the forefront of the state’s priorities. The budget continues to fund nitrogen optimization projects to improve fertilizer efficiency, offers cover

cropping incentives to strengthen soil health, and expands county conservation staffing grants to ensure local expertise is available to farmers. It also sustains the Producer-Led Watershed Grant Program, which enjoys strong bipartisan support for empowering farmers to collaborate in addressing conservation challenges at the local level. Together, these measures help dairy farmers meet environmental compliance requirements, strengthen on-farm sustainability practices, and protect long-term productivity.

Notably, the budget reauthorizes and increases funding for the dairy processor grant program, enabling producers to continue investing in modernization and efficiency. It also renews the state’s agricultural export initiative, sustaining efforts to open new markets for Wisconsin dairy products and strengthen the state’s nearly \$60 billion dairy economy. In addition, \$20 million is set aside for dairy innovation, with specific plans to be determined later in the legislative session. Our priority will be to ensure these funds are directed toward modernizing facilities, expanding



capacity, and keeping Wisconsin a global leader in dairy production.

The road to passage began in mid-February, when the bipartisan, bicameral Joint Finance Committee launched statewide public hearings. Over the spring, hundreds of Wisconsinites — many from rural and agricultural communities — testified in support of programs that bolster dairy production, strengthen supply chains, and improve rural quality of life.

Now, as summer winds down and the Capitol grows quieter, attention turns from passing the budget to putting it into action. For dairy producers, that means new opportunities to modernize operations, strengthen environmental stewardship, and expand market reach — all supported by state investments designed to keep the Badger State's signature industry strong for years to come.

At the same time, the work of shaping policy is far from over. The remainder of the legislative session will be critical in determining how key provisions

— including the \$20 million for dairy innovation — are implemented. That's why it's essential for dairy producers and DBA members to stay engaged with lawmakers. One of the most effective ways to ensure our priorities remain front and center is through the DBA DairyPAC, which allows us to identify and support state-level candidates who understand and value dairy's vital role in Wisconsin's economy. Active participation in DairyPAC strengthens our voice in Madison and helps safeguard the future of our industry.

With the 2025–27 budget now in place, Wisconsin's dairy community is well-positioned to build on its legacy of innovation, stewardship and economic leadership. By working together — on our farms, in our communities and in the Capitol — we can ensure these investments deliver real results for producers and keep Wisconsin dairy thriving for generations to come.

Amplify Your Voice... support DairyPAC!

DairyPAC empowers us to support candidates who champion policies that align with our priorities. By pooling our resources, we can ensure that dairy farmers are heard loud and clear in Madison.

Every dollar contributed to DairyPAC strengthens our ability to advocate for sensible regulations, sustainable practices, and the infrastructure investments we need to succeed. Your support helps elect leaders who understand and value the contributions of Wisconsin's dairy community. Please consider making a donation to DairyPAC today.



Scan here to
donate to the
DairyPAC!



Recent developments in Minnesota dairy policy and what's on the horizon



Lucas Sjostrom
MN Milk executive director

Session prep begins

The summer fair and show season has come and gone, and now it's time to think about the 2026 legislative session.

Minnesota Milk was busy all summer meeting with legislators, regulators and even attorneys, depending on the topic.

First, we want to draw attention to the USDA FSA Dairy Margin Coverage sign-up this fall. Again, Minnesota Milk has secured \$3 million to help rebate some of your premium cost. In 2019, Minnesota Milk secured \$8 million, which related to \$0.23/cwt rebate up to 16 million pounds. This year, it was only \$3 million and production fixed at 2022 levels; we expect the rebate to be closer to \$0.10/cwt. The 2022 level was passed into law in 2023 and, unfortunately, the majority of the farm bill was delayed to finally pass in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), with a “skinny” farm bill expected ahead.

EPA commits to ending surprise inspections in southeastern Minnesota

Thanks to the work of Minnesota Milk and other commodity groups, EPA Region 5 Administrator Anne M. Vogel committed to return to a state of compliance with Minnesota feedlots, rather than active, random surprise inspections. Minnesota Milk is aware of three inspections on southeast Minnesota farms after a petition was filed by groups that do not want livestock agriculture to flourish.

Working closely with affected farmers and U.S. Representative Brad Finstad of Minnesota's first district, Minnesota Milk identified issues with the process. This included working closely with two of the farms to improve the actual inspection process, improve the feedback if there are corrective actions, and ultimately determine whether the inspections are necessary in the first place.

With Administrator Vogel's pledge to stop surprise inspections, it takes some pressure off the southeast portion of the state. Minnesota Milk continues to work with Minnesota Corn and Minnesota Pork in intervening

against the same activist group, to ensure the groups cannot put weight on the scales ahead of the rewrite of the 7020 feedlot rules or alteration of the Groundwater Protection Rule for Commercial Fertilizer.

Minnesota nears record number of special elections

Before the session officially started, Minnesota had a rare string of elections with the first being a friend of Minnesota Milk and former Senate Majority Leader Kari Dziedzic, who succumbed to cancer in late 2024. Doron Clark, also DFL-Minneapolis, was elected to fill the spot.

A residency challenge in District 40B created the temporary Republican majority in elections. But without the House officially giving in, the House stayed tied at 67-67, which continued throughout the session as DFL-Roseville David Gottfried replaced the vacated seat. Finally, in March, Senator Justin Eichorn was arrested, which led to his resignation. He, too, was replaced by someone from the same party—Republican Keri Heintzeman of Nisswa, also the wife of House Environmental Chair Josh Heintzeman.

Market Numbers

Since that time, Sen. Nicole Mitchell, DFL-Woodbury, announced her resignation related to a felony burglary charge; Bruce Anderson, R-Buffalo, died unexpectedly; and tragically, Speaker emeritus Melissa Hortmann was killed during a string of shootings in June.

These three new vacancies could create two more vacancies, depending on who wins. Minnesota Milk will work to create connections with the new legislators. As this newsletter goes to print, we're completing State Fair VIP tours with about a dozen legislators at the state fair.

Looking ahead to 2026: Mark your calendar for Dairy Day at the Capitol, Annual Meeting, and Ice Cream Day

When we look to 2026, a non-budget year, we are looking for ways to improve dairy policy, specifically in feedlots, transportation policy (increasing more rural roads where milk trucks drive to 10-ton roads) and rural vitality. If you have specific issues we should learn about, we'll discuss our resolutions in December to prepare for a session that begins February 17, 2026. Dairy Day at the Capitol is scheduled for February 25, 2026 with the annual meeting a day ahead on February 24, and Ice Cream Day at the Capitol is scheduled for May 6, 2026. ☺

Federal Order Summary — July 2025

Federal Order No.	Federal Order Name	Producer Deliveries	Class I Producer Receipts	Class I Utilization	Class I Price	Producer Price Differential	Change From Previous Year
1	Northeast	2,355,375	625,277	26.4	23.9	\$3.24	\$0.77
5	Appalachian	408,740	293,094	71.7	\$24.42	*NA	*NA
6	Florida	190,774	151,331	79.3	\$25.62	*NA	*NA
7	Southeast	273,448	201,486	73.7	\$24.62	*NA	*NA
30	Upper Midwest	2,290,159	152,393	6.7	\$22.02	\$0.63	\$0.38
32	Central	1,217,796	321,760	26.4	\$22.02	\$1.98	\$1.15
33	Midwest	1,749,183	555,633	31.8	\$22.62	\$2.35	\$0.93
51	California	1,893,777	368,142	19.4	\$21.62	\$1.48	\$0.43
124	Pacific Northwest	573,334	113,674	19.8	\$21.52	\$1.59	\$0.51
126	Southwest	1,221,279	299,182	24.5	\$22.52	\$2.08	\$0.43
131	Arizona	302,145	100,393	33.2	\$21.42	*NA	*NA
All Market Average or Total		12,476,010	3,182,366	25.5%			

Producer Milk by Class — July 2025

	Federal Order 30			Federal Order 33			Federal Order 126		
	%	Product Pounds	Price \$/cwt.	%	Product Pounds	Price \$/cwt.	%	Product Pounds	Price \$/cwt.
Class I	6.70	152,393,213	\$22.02	31.76	555,632,883	\$22.62	24.50	299,181,809	\$22.52
Class II	1.30	28,705,040	\$19.31	17.00	297,283,804	\$19.31	5.64	68,830,858	\$19.31
Class III	91.00	2,084,916,674	\$17.32	41.39	723,919,842	\$17.32	68.86	841,009,997	\$17.32
Class IV	1.00	24,143,742	\$18.89	9.85	172,346,531	\$18.89	1.00	12,256,456	\$18.89
Total* =		2,290,158,669			1,749,183,060			1,221,279,120	
Total Value =		\$454,080,682.79			\$375,537,088			\$260,719,548	

Producer Prices — Federal Orders 30, 33, & 126

Month/Year	FO 30 Producer Price	FO 30 Statistical Uniform Price	FO 33 Producer Price	FO 33 Statistical Uniform Price	FO 126 Producer Price	FO 126 Statistical Uniform Price	Butterfat Price	Protein Price	Other Solids Price	SCC Adjustment Rate
	Differential (\$ per cwt.)	@ 3.50% (\$ per cwt.)	Differential (\$ per cwt.)	@ 3.50% (\$ per cwt.)	Differential (\$ per cwt.)	@ 3.50% (\$ per cwt.)	(\$ per lb.)	(\$ per lb.)	(\$ per lb.)	(\$ per cwt.)
Apr-24	\$0.45	\$15.95	\$2.77	\$18.27	\$2.72	\$18.22	3.3309	0.973	0.2367	0.00077
May-24	\$0.19	\$18.74	\$0.90	\$19.45	\$1.34	\$19.89	3.4636	0.9647	0.2181	0.00094
Jun-24	\$0.18	\$20.05	\$0.96	\$20.83	\$1.33	\$21.20	3.5444	0.9991	0.2326	0.001
Jul-24	\$0.25	\$20.04	\$1.42	\$21.21	\$1.65	\$21.44	3.572	1.0149	0.2571	0.00099
Aug-24	\$0.20	\$20.86	\$1.06	\$21.72	\$1.41	\$22.07	3.5632	1.0484	0.2959	0.00102
Sep-24	(\$0.24)	\$23.10	(\$0.62)	\$22.72	(\$0.45)	\$22.89	3.6114	1.1109	0.343	0.00114
Oct-24	(\$0.47)	\$22.38	(\$0.67)	\$22.18	(\$0.83)	\$22.02	3.0851	1.1628	0.3705	0.00112
Nov-24	\$0.38	\$20.33	\$1.60	\$21.55	\$1.81	\$21.76	3.0623	1.1974	0.4049	0.00096
Dec-24	\$0.36	\$18.98	\$1.89	\$20.51	\$1.93	\$20.55	2.9104	1.2151	0.4493	0.00088
Jan-25	\$0.13	\$20.47	\$0.51	\$20.85	\$1.02	\$21.36	2.946	1.2002	0.5384	0.00094
Feb-25	\$0.13	\$20.31	\$0.64	\$20.82	\$0.92	\$21.10	2.8186	1.1552	0.4799	0.00095
Mar-25	\$0.20	\$18.82	\$1.10	\$19.72	\$1.20	\$19.82	2.6242	1.0393	0.3647	0.00091
Apr-25	\$0.27	\$17.75	\$1.32	\$18.80	\$1.57	\$19.05	2.6406	0.9994	0.3087	0.00087
May-25	\$0.07	\$18.64	\$0.23	\$18.80	\$0.59	\$19.16	2.6627	1.0145	0.3222	0.00092
Jun-25	\$0.28	\$19.10	\$0.55	\$19.37	\$0.52	\$19.34	2.7378	1.0037	0.2914	0.00097
Jul-25	\$0.63	\$17.95	\$2.35	\$19.67	\$2.08	\$19.40	2.8435	1.0286	0.3092	0.00088

Make your voice count: How you can influence local ordinances



Erin Tomasik
*Community relations
manager*

Livestock agriculture continues to be the subject of attack for many environmental groups, in more recent years, through local government. Town

boards across Wisconsin are being pressured into forming subcommittees to discuss CAFOs, permitted farms, livestock operations, or any other term anti-agriculture advocates can coin to fly under the radar. On several occasions, I've been witness to the way one or two citizens in the town repeatedly ask their town board to create a subcommittee, at times raising their voices and bordering on throwing a tantrum when the town board doesn't wish to pursue the topic.

If the town board does fall victim to the misinformation being shared as a scare tactic, a subcommittee is often formed. However,

rarely is livestock agriculture accurately represented. In one town, a farmer who owns and operates an apple orchard is considered the "ag representative" on their subcommittee, which is tasked with discussing if the town needs an ordinance to protect the citizens from livestock operations. It is imperative that livestock farmers maintain awareness of the discussions in their township and offer their expertise if conversations on livestock operations are taking place. The only way we can prevent these Operations Ordinances from passing is by getting involved and pushing back.

One of the best success stories we have to date is about a farmer in western Wisconsin. Angie, a non-permitted dairy farmer, was asked by the chairman to serve on her town's subcommittee. Her town formed a study committee to research the impacts of CAFOs within that town, both the negatives and the positives.

For three months, Angie attended these meetings, but she was dismissed, and her perspective, as the only farmer in the group, was ignored. The study committee invited "experts" to provide them with information, but these subject experts were Danny Akenson, Field Organizer for GROWW, and Lisa Doerr, a citizen from Polk County who organizes the Protect Your Town website. The study committee never discussed inviting a representative from the DNR or another agricultural organization to offer their perspective. The leader of the subcommittee would often tell the town board that a decision was "unanimous" even though Angie was not in agreement with the others. The town's study committee was actively looking at and discussing an Operations Ordinance, the same one that is currently being

pushed in towns across western Wisconsin.

Being unsure of how to proceed and worried that this ordinance was going to be steamrolled through, Angie began making phone calls, trying to find farming advocates to offer her help. She and I connected in mid-July, before her next town board meeting. After hearing Angie's story, I encouraged her to speak out at the meeting and ask the board to clarify the study committee's purpose and whether they should be drafting an ordinance. We also discussed other experts with whom DBA has strong relationships that could be invited to their meetings. Most importantly, I encouraged Angie to inform the board that her voice, the farmer's voice, was not being heard.

At that next meeting, many farmers from the community came to advocate for more representation on the study committee. The leader of the committee pushed back, stating that there was "lots of reading and research to do" and alluded that farmers didn't have the time or capacity to serve on that committee. When asked if the study committee was tasked with drafting an ordinance, the town board clarified that was not the intent; however, the leader of the committee handed the board the drafted ordinance anyway. After this lengthy discussion, the town board's ultimate decision was to unanimously disband the study committee and throw out the drafted ordinance.

This win for agriculture would not have been possible without Angie's willingness to serve on the committee and speak out at her town board meeting. We need the farming voice to be heard, loud and clear, in these towns.

If your town is discussing ordinances that could impact animal agriculture, please give me a call at 920-460-6746. I would be happy to provide resources and support to farmers within your community. 📞



Producer-led watershed groups leading the way in conservation

Farmer-led Watershed Conservation Groups are driving real change: Some of the most impactful conservation work in farming doesn't necessarily come from a specific practice or technique, but rather from the farmers themselves. Farmer-led watershed conservation groups are proving to be a powerful force for driving sustainability through innovation and collaboration. Listen to our DairyStream podcast for the complete story. 🎧



Scan here to learn how producer-led watershed groups are paving the way in conservation!



DairyStream
Brought to you by the Voice of Milk

Engage in talks on policy, sustainability, market trends, new technology, industry news and more with dairy leaders.

Permitting updates: What you should know as fall hits full swing



Tim Baumgartner
Director of
regulatory &
permitting services

The beginning of this season was challenging due to the cooler and wetter weather, but most everyone seemed to be able to plant their crops in a timely manner and has had

success with hay harvesting. I've heard positive reports about strong tonnage and excellent quality, provided you've managed to avoid the rain.

As fall approaches, you will be busy harvesting corn silage and spreading manure, but we would like to remind you of some important deadlines and processes.

Review your Nutrient

Management Plans: Be sure to review your Nutrient Management Plans with agronomists and

those responsible for spreading manure, whether they are farm employees or contracted haulers. It is important to have sensitive areas identified for setbacks from surface waters as well as conduits to groundwater. Also, take time to emphasize manure hose and field tank placements. While we strive to ensure everything is well-maintained, failures can occur. Therefore, it is vital to maintain a safe distance from sensitive areas. Additionally, ensure that manure handling equipment is properly calibrated.

Maintain current land application

records: Identify appropriate fields that receive nutrients and record applications promptly. If you typically apply additional manure later in the fall, in October, or if the temperatures allow up until November 30, don't forget to record the date that your 180-day marker is visible. Remember, surface applications of liquid manure are prohibited under the terms of the WPDES permit.

Choose suitable sites for

headland stacking: When handling or applying manure, ensure that headland stacking of solid manure only occurs in approved areas. If you are unsure if you have an approved area, contact your agronomist, DNR, or Edge Maestro staff to assist you.

Complete your quarterly report:

As we navigate through this season's busy activities, it's important to stay organized. Don't forget to complete your quarterly report, which is due in January. As the second quarter ends in August and many begin harvesting corn silage, it's easy to overlook important tasks. Please double-check that your monthly calendars for June, July and August are complete and ensure that you have finished the Quarterly Inspection Summary Report.

Here's to a safe and productive fall season ahead. 🍁



The **only** program providing independent and complete permitting consultation to dairy farms.

Contact Us

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Director of Regulatory & Permitting Services

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Perspectives, Sponsored by **BMO** 
By Brad Guse

Standing atop a mountain range in Colorado, I looked down at a series of hilltops collectively called the three sisters. From up there, it's easy to see that there are three hill features on a ridge that leads to the valley floor below. But when standing in a saddle, under a cliff between two of those hilltops, it's hard to tell what direction the valley floor is and through the trees, really hard to see the top of the mountain range. Perspective.

One of the traits often overlooked in good managers is the ability to change perspectives, to look at things in a different way. The leaders that possess this skill tend to find more creative solutions while building a successful culture in their operations.

Beyond the bottom line

When you look at your financial statements, for example, are you able to change your perspective? As the owner and manager, you're typically drawn to the bottom line. Did you make money or did you lose money? Did you gain net worth or lose net worth? But that's not the only perspective.

As you come down off that mountain range and dig deeper into those numbers, your operating expense ratio may present the first change in perspective. That is, how many dollars did you invest in operating expenses to generate your revenue? Was it more or less efficient than last year? What side of the expense ratio is it? That is, is

it a change in revenue or a change in expenses that moved the needle? What caused the change? Was there a particular expense that caused the issue? What can be done to improve that area?

A different view of debt

While not always the first thing a manager looks at, another number that adds perspective is one your banker looks at: debt repayment capacity. While many believe the banker first looks at collateral, the reality is debt repayment capacity is more important. Why?

If the banker is relying on collateral values, it means the assets have to be sold to repay the debt. It's important to have loans secured, but repayment capacity is far more important. Repayment capacity is simply how many dollars you have available for every dollar of debt payment required on an accrual adjusted basis. (for the full definition, please refer to the Farm Financial Standards Council's Farm Financial Guidelines for Agriculture at FFSC.org).

The rule of thumb here is that you need to have \$1.25 of funds available to repay every dollar of debt. That gives you an operating cushion to build working capital and put equity into capital projects. While it's an important ratio to your banker, it's not always the perspective a manager has. But the most successful managers

fully understand how important this number is to their operation's future.

This article continues on our blog! Scan here to read the rest.



Brad Guse
Director, Production Agriculture, U.S. Food, Consumer and Agribusiness, BMO



Nominations for the annual Advocate of the Year Award and Community Outreach Award are now open

Do you know a dairy farmer doing outstanding work on behalf of DBA or their community? Then be sure to submit a nomination to recognize them for one of DBA's prestigious member awards.

This is an excellent opportunity to recognize and celebrate fellow farmers who have made significant contributions to the dairy community. All nominations must be received by September 22. Winners will be announced at the 2026 Dairy Strong conference on January 15.

DBA Advocate of the Year award *Sponsored by Vita Plus Corporation*

Dairy farmers who do an exemplary job promote dairy and its community are honored with the annual Advocate of the Year award. It's a special recognition for passionate, leadership-focused dairy farmers active in promoting sound dairy policy in their communities and beyond.



Scan here to submit your nominations for the DBA Advocate of the Year!

Qualifications:

- A DBA member in good standing (non-board member)
- Active dairy farmer

- Committed to sharing the real and positive message of dairy with today's customers
- Actively involved in other organizations, while also assuming leadership roles
- Engages customers in farm tours and visits
- Promotes the dairy community and farm through the use of social media
- Develops opportunities to foster positive relationships with neighbors
- Committed to standing up for the dairy community on a local and state-wide level
- Not a past recipient (*see a list of past recipients on our website*)

DBA Community Outreach Award *Presented in collaboration with Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin*

The DBA Community Outreach Award is presented in collaboration with Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin as a way to recognize those dairy farmers who are active in their community sharing the story and positive messages of dairy farms and products.

Qualifications:

- A DBA member in good standing
- A trusted voice in their local community
- Active participation in community activities promoting the dairy industry
- Holds leadership positions in agriculture and/or non-agriculture organizations
- Exhibited engagement with the broader community
- Passionate about sharing their farm story 🌱



Scan here to submit your nominations for the Community Outreach Award!



Sciotto and Leibl to headline Dairy Strong 2026

The 2026 Dairy Strong conference will feature keynote speakers Brett Sciotto, CEO of Idealyst Innovation, and Ben Leibl, Public Relations Specialist for Kwik Trip, Inc. The annual dairy conference, which will be held at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay, January 14-15, will focus on leading with purpose, one person, one policy and one farm at a time.

Brett Sciotto, former Army Intelligence Officer and founder of Idealyst, a firm empowering American farmers and ranchers by solving on-farm challenges and unlocking new opportunities through innovation, will deliver his compelling report on the Future State of Agriculture. He will examine external forces, such as global affluence, geopolitics, climate volatility and human health. A well-known speaker on agriculture innovation and trends, Sciotto will use his unique and engaging presentation style to inform and empower Dairy Strong attendees.

Have you ever wondered how Kwik Trip's reputation for best-in-class customer service came to be? Then be sure to be at Dairy Strong to hear from one of the Kwik Trip leaders, Ben Leibl. In his keynote address, Leibl will share

how compassion in the workplace and treating others well creates a dynamic work environment. He will share why we shouldn't "keep score" with our coworkers and highlight the importance of serving others without expecting anything in return as a key to finding happiness in life.

In his role at Kwik Trip, Leibl assists coworkers with ongoing educational needs and directs the company's praise program, which last year included acknowledging over 2,600 unsolicited guest letters.

"We're eager to welcome Brett and Ben as our keynote speakers for the upcoming Dairy Strong conference in January," Tim Trotter, DBA CEO, said. "They each bring

a unique message, underscoring the importance of both strategies and relationships in establishing a stronger future for dairy."

The 2026 Dairy Strong will feature well-known speakers, panelists and breakout sessions that explore how leading with purpose continues to shape the dairy community's future.

Sponsorship and exhibitor information, speaker updates and other 2026 Dairy Strong conference announcements can be found at DairyStrong.org.



Minnesota Milk awards \$12,000 in student scholarships, supporting future ag leaders

The Minnesota Milk Producers Association announced the recipients of its annual scholarship program. Six students will receive a \$2,000 scholarship award to pursue secondary education in the dairy industry.

“Minnesota Milk has been dedicated to supporting opportunities for young people in agriculture since starting this program in 2006,” Garrett Luthens, board president, said. “It’s wonderful to see so many students across the state enthusiastic about their future careers and potential impact on the dairy community.”

The 2025 scholarship recipients are:



Amelia Miller, Bremer Farms, will be attending the University of Minnesota – Crookston and majoring in animal science. She plans to enter the veterinary fast program at the Twin Cities campus and become a large animal veterinarian.



Caden Johnson, Johnson’s Rolling Acres, will be attending Michigan State University to study dairy management. In the future, he plans to return to his family’s dairy farm as a next-generation owner.



Conlan Carlson, Carlson Dairy, LLP, will be attending South Dakota State University, double majoring in precision agriculture and aviation. He plans to use the knowledge he gains to support his family’s farm and promote the dairy industry to the public through education.



Dani Poppler, Harlan and Jennifer Poppler Farm, is pursuing a degree at South Dakota State University. She is majoring in dairy production pre-veterinary medicine and plans to become a dairy veterinarian.



Ella Weist, Autumnwood Farm, will be attending the University of Minnesota – Crookston to study animal science and pre-veterinary. She plans to become a large animal veterinarian.



Lauren Knudson, Krause Holsteins, will be attending Ridgewater College to earn a certificate in artificial insemination, and then plans to transfer to South Dakota State University to obtain a degree in animal science to begin a career as an AI Technician.

Each student is a dependent of a current MMPA farmer member or employee of a farmer member and has demonstrated outstanding leadership abilities, academic achievement and involvement in the dairy industry.

For more information about this year’s scholarship winners, visit mnmilk.org.



The Voice of Milk organizations set strategy and leadership to meet evolving member needs

The organizations within the Voice of Milk (Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative, Dairy Business Association and Minnesota Milk Producers Association) along with Farmers for Sustainable Food, have embarked on a new strategic plan poised to shape the collective organizations to provide relevant, reliable and innovative programs and resources to their members and stakeholders. The three-year plan is an integrated approach anchored by a robust research initiative led by the Stratovation Group that included both qualitative and quantitative aspects to collect information from dairy farmers and processors across the Midwest.

The objective of the strategic imperatives is to support members to be the best positioned to fully integrate into the dairy value chain. The current partnerships between the Voice of Milk organizations and the full value chain uniquely positions them to achieve this objective in a way that is mutually beneficial to all stakeholders.

“Our organizations are rooted in advocating for farmers at the local, state and federal level and this remains a top priority, now more than ever, as we see the continual pressures put on our farmer members,” said Tim Trotter, CEO. “Over the past several years we have also established nationally recognized, farmer-led sustainability programs that

have enabled our members to better understand the impact their practices can have on improving local environmental concerns. We will build on this foundation and take our programs and members to the next level in understanding and implementing environmental metrics on their farms that can transfer through the value chain.”

The organizations’ leadership has been restructured to execute on the strategic imperatives as well as strengthen the focus on service delivery to members and stakeholders. The new structure, effective August 1, includes the establishment of an executive team, and the naming of new directors:

Voice of Milk Executive Leadership Team:

- Tim Trotter, Chief Executive Officer
- Lauren Brey, Chief Experience Officer
- Anna Waldron, Chief of Staff
- Karen Gefvert, Chief Policy Officer
- Laura Hensley, Chief Marketing Officer

Voice of Milk Senior Leadership Team:

- Lucas Sjostrom, Executive Director, Minnesota Milk Producers Association and Managing Director, Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
- Chad Zuleger, Executive Director, Dairy Business Association
- Jamie Fisher, Managing Director, Farmers for Sustainable Food
- Tim Baumgartner, Director of Regulatory and Permitting
- Jennifer Block, Director of Value Chain Partnerships
- Jim Eckberg, Director of Science and Innovation
- Andy Kamenick, Director of Finance

“This is an exciting time for both our members and our staff,” Trotter says. “We have built a team of professionals with the experience and the knowledge needed to bring the best resources to our members. We will continue to monitor the dairy landscape to remain relevant to the industry we proudly serve.” 



Board Member Spotlights



DBA Vice President

Travis Speirs | *Shiloh Dairy - Brillion, WI*

Tell us a bit about yourself and your farm.

Shiloh Dairy is a fourth generation dairy farm owned and operated by Gordon Speirs and me. Together, we milk 2,800 cows, raise 75% of our youngstock on site, with the balance being raised either in Nebraska or at the neighbors' farm. We have a strong commitment to creating a culture where everyone is treated equally, recognized for achievements, and has opportunities to learn and grow as we grow the business. I am 39, married with three kids, ages 10, 7, and 6, who all love coming to the dairy to see the cows and cats, and are interested in learning and working on the farm.

Tell us why you are committed to the organization and what it means to your farm.

DBA works behind-the-scenes advocating for us and the industry, not only in Wisconsin, but regionally, and continues to grow its reach and desire to help. With that, it felt right to step back into the policy world, not politics, and be a champion for not only our success, but also for our neighbors as well.

What are some challenges the dairy community is facing today that you feel our organization can take steps to address?

DBA has always been at the forefront of dairy farmers' challenges because it is member-led and continually seeks the advice of its members on where to focus energy for the biggest impact. Today's challenges are immigration, labelling (not only with non-milk but also with the truth about what is in milk), regulatory changes and oversight and animal care.

What are you currently enjoying the most in your role as vice president, and what are you looking forward to in the months ahead?

I am enjoying networking with the members on the board and hearing what is happening from a policy standpoint. Now that I have been back involved for a year and have had an opportunity to get caught up with what is happening, I am able to voice my opinion and thoughts toward policy for the best outcome possible for the industry.



Edge Vice President

Mike Crinion | *Ash Grove Dairy - Lake Benton, MN*

Tell us a bit about yourself and your farm.

I'm originally from Ireland. My wife Patricia and our three daughters moved here in 2004 to expand our farming operations. I'm currently a managing partner of Ash Grove Dairy in Lake Benton, Minn. In addition to serving on the Edge board, I'm also the Chair of U.S. Farmers & Ranchers in Action (USFRA).

Tell us why you are committed to the organization and what it means to your farm.

Dairy farmers need a strong, independent voice to advocate for their interests. Edge has a solid track record, consistently placing dairy farmers at the center of its decision-making process. The organization is forward-thinking and innovative. It's important that we support and protect the good work that farmers are doing together.

What are you looking forward to the most in your role on the Edge board?

Immigration issues create challenges for farmers, and Edge has worked tirelessly to improve this for multiple years. A lot has been done, but there's more to do to create a proper immigration system that's suitable for the dairy community and the wider community.

What are you currently enjoying the most in your role as vice president, and what are you looking forward to in the months ahead?

I am passionate about creating diverse revenue streams for farmers, including the potential for them to monetize their carbon credits and be compensated for their important work in soil health.



MN Milk Board President

Garrett Luthens | *Skyview Dairy Farm - Hutchinson, MN*

Tell us a bit about yourself and your farm.

Skyview Dairy Farm is a family-owned and operated dairy that has been operating since 1968. The late Daryl Luthens, who recently passed away on September 1, first started the dairy in June of 1968 with seven cows. Today, Skyview is in its second generation of management and is waiting on whether or not the third generation (currently ages 5-14) will be interested in joining the farm.

Tell us why you are committed to the organization and what it means to your farm.

I'm part of MN Milk because I want to have the assurance that someone will be there for us when we need them in the policy arena. The association came to our support in 2008 when Skyview wanted to increase the size of the herd. Former Executive Director of the Minnesota Milk Association, Bob Lefebvre, came to speak on behalf of the dairy industry's positive financial impact on communities and the counties where they reside. Dairy farmers make up a small percentage of the United States population, and our voices are often drowned out in local and state governments. I believe we need to support organizations that believe in keeping dairy's voice heard.

What are some challenges the dairy community is facing today that you feel our organization can take steps to address?

MN Milk maintains a positive image in St. Paul. It speaks to all styles and sizes of Minnesota's dairies. The challenge will arise when St. Paul loses interest in how dairy positively impacts financial, social and environmental aspects of communities outside of St. Paul.

What are you currently enjoying the most in your role as president, and what are you looking forward to in the months ahead?

I appreciate that my peers believed I was qualified for the position. The MN Milk Board continues to celebrate successful engagements this past legislative session, including Ice Cream Day at the Capitol. We also took part in State Fair tours with legislators, which always brings positive conversations with them.

We Are the Voice of Milk.



We are a force of independent dairy organizations, united across state lines to make sure dairy farmers are heard. From local communities to Congress to the supply chain, we speak up where it matters most.

We advocate for policies that are smart, science-driven and built to last—because the future of dairy depends on it.

This is dairy's voice. This is your voice.

Visit voiceofmilk.com to learn more.





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