

Spring 2025

the
Voice of Milk

A leading force in dairy advocacy.

Connector



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*Transitions in Congress
- welcoming new
Congressional staff*

*Permitting updates for
the new year*

*Dairy markets
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Welcome to the Voice of Milk Connector



Tim Trotter
CEO

I trust everyone survived the winter season and looking forward to spring. Spring aways brings optimism and good vibes for me; I hope for all of you, too.

With the launch of the Voice of Milk umbrella brand – comprising of Dairy Business Association, Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative and Minnesota Milk Producers

Association – we're excited to share our first edition of the Voice of Milk Connector.

Because our three dairy organizations are aligned in our goals of advocating for our members, this publication will share policy perspectives and insights at federal, state (Minnesota and Wisconsin) and local levels.

We will be releasing the Connector on a quarterly basis throughout the year in place of the individual organization newsletters mailed throughout the year.

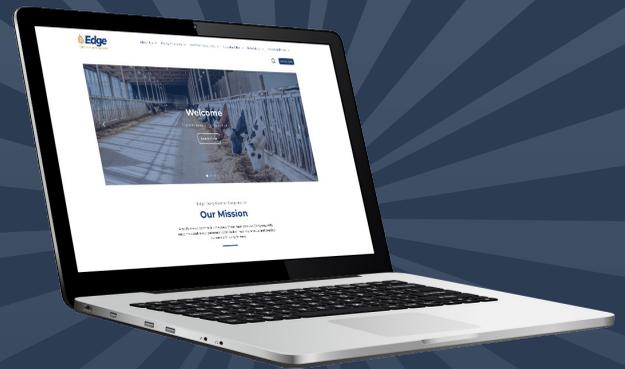
The Connector features policy and advocacy information, strategic project updates, upcoming events, board and staff updates, member stories and more. It showcases the achievements of our dairy farmer members and how they are enhancing their farms and contributing to their communities.

We hope you find this publication to be a useful resource with a wealth of information, providing you with important changes and updates happening in dairy.

Together, we all play an important role in the dairy community. As we face new challenges, overcome obstacles, and embrace new opportunities, we can do so with a stronger, more powerful voice — the Voice of Milk.

Here's to our continued growth and success together!

Tim



The new Edge website: edgedairy.com

We're excited to announce the launch of a new website: edgedairy.com. We invite you to explore all the new and exciting features. The website offers a new streamlined user experience and serves as a valuable resource for our members.

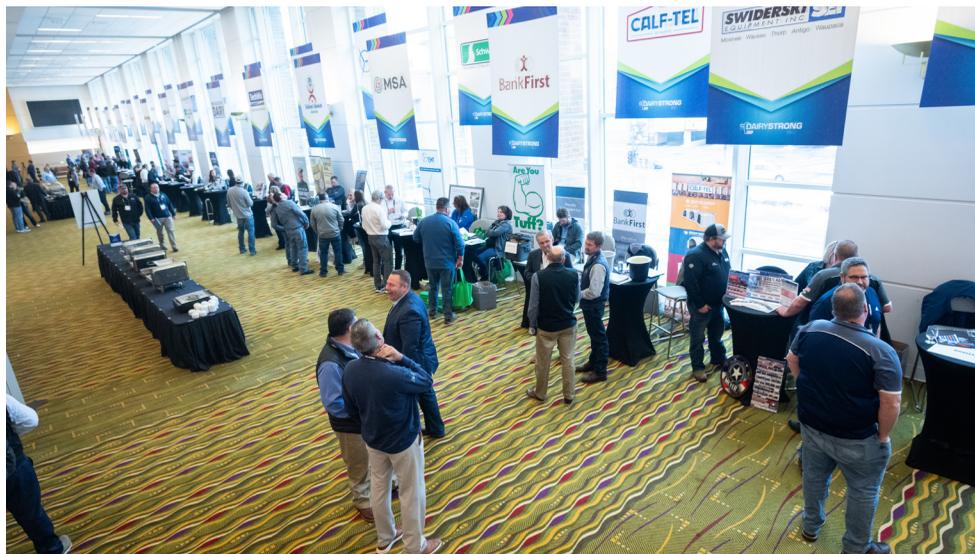
With the launch of the new website, Edge members now have access to the new Edge member portal. In this portal, you can access exclusive member-only content, including important resources, links to past webinars, policy updates and other information that may be important to your farm. Additionally, you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

If you have not logged in to your new Edge member profile account yet, please check for a password reset email. A password reset is needed in order to log in.

If you need the password email resent to you or have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us at info@voiceofmilk.com.

Watch for website updates for MN Milk and DBA in the near future!

Dairy Business Association's annual event draws over 400 attendees



Innovation in the dairy community was the central theme of Dairy Strong, a conference focused on the dairy industry held at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay, Wis.

More than 400 people attended Dairy Strong, which featured two keynotes and multiple breakout sessions focused on a broad range of topics from sustainability to how the new presidential administration may affect dairy stakeholders.

Innovation happens when ideas from throughout an organization collide, said keynote speaker Jeff Eggers, a senior advisor and partner at the McChrystal Group and co-author of “Leaders: Myth and Reality,” a Wall Street Journal best seller.

“A lot of insight comes from the bottom of the organization and it’s important for leaders to talk less and listen more,” he said. “Leaders need to create a culture

of accountability and safety in their organizations.”

Eggers retired from the U.S. Navy after serving more than 20 years as a combat veteran Navy SEAL in 2013 and served as a special assistant to the President for National Security Affairs for six years in both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations.

“Leaders need to talk less and listen more” to inspire innovation, he said. “When it comes to leading and creating innovation, you need to learn to not take yourself too seriously, think like a kindergartner, decentralize to a point where there’s discomfort and be responsive to context.”

Sustainability

Sustainability in dairy farming remains an important topic with several Dairy Strong breakout sessions focused on what farmers can do to reduce their carbon footprint.

Tim Baye, a professor of business development/energy finance and state energy specialist with the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension, said dairy farmers have a clear pathway to take steps to lower their carbon footprint, share that information and become part of a carbon marketplace, where they can be financially compensated for their efforts.

“For any new type of product — and that’s what this is — you need to be able to define it and it must be performance based,” he said.

Farmers should ideally be able to share information about their carbon footprint with their processors and pass it on to consumer-packaged goods companies, who are interested in that information as more consumers ask for that information, Baye said.

Shashi Menon, CEO of EcoEngineers, said the Climate-Smart Guidebook provides farmers with an overview of how carbon accounting and carbon markets work. The Guidebook was created as part of Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative’s USDA-funded Climate-Smart project.

“Farmers can be in control of their data and maximize the revenues back to the farm,” he said. “More and more people want access to carbon offsetting data and that is something that farms have.”

Farmers for Sustainable Food (FSF) is partnering with Edge and has a Climate-Smart Program, which launched last year and helps farmers determine what conservation practices are most effective for their individual farms and provides tools to document their environmental and financial effects. The program is also available to DBA and Minnesota Milk members, as well as enrolled processors and members of FSF's farmer-led groups.

Fifty-three farms enrolled in the program's inaugural year.

"The first year of the FSF Climate-Smart Program shows promising results as part of a five-year effort to empower farmers and add value throughout the supply chain," said Drew Kessler, scientist and principal of Houston Engineering, Inc. Participating dairies reduced enough carbon dioxide from the air "equivalent to powering 6,602 U.S. homes for one year or removing 11,467 U.S. passenger vehicles from the road."

Patrick Maier, a partner in Maier Farms, LLC in Dane County, Wisconsin, participated in the Climate-Smart Program because he wanted to know more about how much carbon dioxide his farm produced.

"I knew more consumers were interested in the carbon footprint of some products and thought it would be a good idea to learn

more about our farm's carbon output," he said.

Another farmer enrolled in the program, Kristin Quist, was surprised to see her farm's carbon score, adding it provided a good baseline for Minglewood Inc., her family's dairy farm in Polk County, Wisconsin.

"The data is new to us, but we shared it with our creamery, who were happy to see it and that we were participating in this program," she said.

Michael Crinion, an owner of a dairy farm in Minnesota, said consumer product manufacturers

are interested in hearing what farmers are doing to decrease their carbon footprint and may be willing to pay a little extra for dairy products with a smaller carbon footprint.

Industry economics

Immigration and tariffs are two top concerns the ag industry has relayed to the new presidential administration, said Chuck Conner, president and CEO of the National Council of Farmers Cooperators, during a keynote discussion on what to look for in federal policies in 2025.

Michael Torrey, president of the Torrey Advisory Group, a bipartisan consulting group focused on farm and ag issues, said renewing the tax cuts, which expire at the end of

the year, will be another priority in Washington, D.C. He predicted the Republicans will need to work with the Democrats to get the renewal passed or include it as part of a larger bill, which also has some things in it that they support.

"The Republicans have a very small advantage in the House so both sides will be needed. And if the Republicans don't get anything done, they know they'll lose big in two years since they control everything," Torrey said.

During a presentation on the dairy market outlook for 2025, Mike North, president of Ever.Ag, agreed tariffs are a big deal for farmers and something they should pay attention to. He said it is possible the government may supplement farmers' income if tariffs hit the industry hard.

"I know no one likes a handout but we may need it to get through this," he said.

Looking at the dairy market in general, North said there has been a large increase in the amount of cheese being exported.

"We saw a new record in cheese exports in 2024 and hopefully that is something we will see continue in 2025," he said. "It's been great for the industry."

This year's Dairy Strong conference brought over 400 attendees, representing over 150,000 cows, and industry professionals to Green Bay for the annual conference. 🌱

"The first year of the FSF Climate-Smart Program shows promising results as part of a five-year effort to empower farmers and add value throughout the supply chain."

-Drew Kessler
Houston Engineering

DBA Dairy Day at the Capitol



Join us in bringing the voice of the dairy community to Madison as we move dairy forward! You're invited to attend our annual Dairy Day at the Capitol on April 16. We encourage DBA corporate and farmer members to participate in this event. This is your chance to share your experiences from your farm and business with elected officials. Scan the QR code below to RSVP to attend.

Contact Chad Zuleger at czuleger@dairyforward.com if you have any questions, and visit dairyforward.com for more information.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Scan here to register!

Minnesota Milk hosts annual meeting and Dairy Day at the Capitol



Minnesota Milk, Minnesota's dairy advocacy group, gathered dairy farmers and supporters for its annual meeting and Dairy Day at the Capitol event in St. Paul on February 5.



Dairy farmers from throughout the state met directly with lawmakers, sharing their stories and advocating for sensible dairy policy.



"Our members are eager to share their stories and experiences with policymakers," Lucas Sjostrom, Minnesota Milk executive director, said. "I was thrilled to see so many farmers engaging and working together to help make positive change for our state's agricultural community."



During the annual meeting, the group elected two board members:

- Anthony Anderson of Stone Dairy in Henning, Minn., was re-elected to the board. He will serve as the board's vice president.
- Dean Smith of the D & D Dairy, Rushford, Minn., was elected to the board.



Outgoing board member and former president and vice president Shelly DePestel of Daley Farm of Lewiston

was recognized for her dedication and contributions to the organization.

"I look forward to returning next year and in future years to continue advocating at the Capitol," DePestel said.

Other board members include Garrett Luthens of Skyview Dairy, president; Tom Walsh of Riverview, secretary; Rick Smith of Blue Edge Dairy, treasurer; Sadie Frericks of Blue Diamond Dairy. For more information about Minnesota Milk and the group's advocacy efforts, visit mnmilk.org. 

UPCOMING EVENTS



SCHOLARSHIPS



Scan for more information.

APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 1



Ice Cream at the Capitol

Save the date:

Wednesday, May 7



MINNESOTA MILK CUP

Mount Frontenac Golf Course
Wednesday, August 13

SAVE THE DATE!



DAIRY GOLF CLASSIC



DBA

Tuesday, July 29
Thornberry Creek
Oneida, WI

SAVE THE DATE!

Communication is key in dairy advocacy

After Paul Fetzer's father passed away, Paul felt compelled to take on his father's role in advocating for the dairy community. Over the years, he has grown to enjoy engaging with policymakers and sharing his insights directly from the farm.

Paul's involvement in the dairy industry stems from his family legacy of contributing to the greater good of the dairy community. His family's multi-generational centennial farm in Elmwood, Wis, Fetzer Farms, has evolved over time into the modern, 1,400-cow farm it is today. They utilize the latest technologies and innovations to maintain a productive dairy farm ready to face the challenges and unknowns of the future.

From hosting Breakfast on the Farm to offering farm education tours for numerous groups, legislators and students, Paul and his family believe time spent within the local community is well worth the commitment. He has also participated in a variety of agricultural leadership roles, serving nine years on the DBA board of directors and 11 years on the Ag Partners Co-op board of directors.

As a DBA board member, Paul spent much of his time on policy issues and made frequent visits to Madison to share his story with lawmakers. He's also had the opportunity to take several trips to Washington, D.C.

"What I've found is that many of our legislators in Madison are removed from the farm and may not be familiar with all of the things that agriculture is doing, especially when it comes to dairy," Paul said. "That's why it's so important to be able to talk with them and share our insights to hopefully influence policies that impact our day-to-day lives."

Being an educational resource for those without an agricultural background might help lessen the impact of potentially burdensome policies on farmers, he said.

"I've told this to people for years and years; if you're not involved with policy, it might just run you right over," he said. "As farmers, we need to take part in important conversations, instead of just reading about them or watching from the sidelines."

Paul is actively involved in his local town board and various committees. He strives to help people better understand the farming practices that are going on in the area and educate those who hold misconceptions about farming.

"Farming is always evolving through technology and best management practices, so continuous communication is key," Paul said. "If we want others to understand what's going on in the dairy community, they need to know why we do what we do and how we do things responsibly."

DBA's 2024 Advocate of the Year

During DBA's Dairy Strong conference this January, Paul was honored with the 2024 Advocate of the Year award for his contributions to Wisconsin's dairy community. The award is sponsored by Vita Plus Corporation.

"I'm really amazed by this award and thankful for everyone's support," Paul said. "Our farm wouldn't have gotten to where we're at today without DBA and our involvement with positive consultants. I hope that our farm carries on for many more years and future generations to come."

Paul was awarded for excelling in managing his farm while actively engaging with his local community and taking on agricultural leadership roles.

His passion for advocating on behalf of the dairy community is evident in his commitment to engaging with lawmakers, and his desire to ensure policymakers understand the challenges farmers face today.

"Paul was an insightful leader and helped us to grow some of our policy efforts," Tim Trotter, DBA CEO, said. "He is an exceptional individual who embodies what it means to continue moving dairy forward." 🌱



DAIRYSTRONG
Dairy's Path Forward: Policies. Practices. Priorities

Transitions in Congress — welcoming new Congressional staff



Karen Gefvert
Director of
government affairs

A new year brings new beginnings and an opportunity to foster new relationships. As a new session of Congress gets underway, some Congressional

staff will be transitioning to new offices and new roles within existing offices, providing us with opportunities to bolster existing relationships and create new ones. Likewise, the Trump 47 Administration has started to get settled in and implement their policy initiatives. The Senate continues to hold cabinet confirmation hearings and vote on approval of nominees. The next steps will be hearings and confirmations for undersecretary positions, and then we will start to see agency level initiatives really start to get underway.

With all the changes, Edge is working diligently on behalf of our members to build new relationships with agency and Congressional staff, revisit existing relationships, start making new connections and advocate our 2025 policy priorities.



Edge farmer members and staff traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with federal lawmakers and agency leaders.

The Edge team visited with a wide range of agency and Congressional offices in the first part of February to highlight our 2025 policy priorities as well as communicate the current pulse of dairy farmers in the upper Midwest.

Additionally, Edge farmer members and staff traveled to

Washington, D.C., in mid-March to meet with federal lawmakers and agency leaders to discuss current challenges facing the dairy community. Congressional representatives had the chance to speak directly with farmers and learn about the most important issues that matter to our members.

Meetings focused on our policy priorities, which include:

Rural Workforce for Rural Prosperity — The dairy industry faces significant labor shortages, particularly in rural areas, making workforce accessibility and reliability a top policy priority.

Farm Bill Advocacy — The 2025 farm bill will be an essential opportunity for Edge to advocate for ensuring accurate and timely payments for dairy farmers and to retool existing program adjustments needed to the Dairy Margin Coverage program, ensuring conservation programs are funded, voluntary and based on science, as well as

maintenance to several dairy indemnity and donation programs. These programs can greatly affect our farmers' ability to earn a living.

Trade and Supply Chain — The Upper Midwest is a powerhouse for cheese production. Ensuring opportunities for dairy through existing, expanding or emerging markets is essential to healthy growth. New and expanded markets through new trade agreements, renegotiated trade agreements and enforcement of existing agreements provide opportunities for market access.

Environmental Sustainability

— Edge stands with our farmers in their commitment to seek effective and financially viable ways to protect and improve water quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We believe environmentally focused policies affecting agriculture should be guided by farmers, grounded in science, driven by the marketplace and sufficiently flexible to allow for innovation at the farm level.

Making our voices heard

Edge Vice President, Michael Crinion and Director of government affairs, Karen Gefvert attended a fundraiser for Senate Majority Leader, John Thune (R-S.D.) with special guest, Senate Agriculture Chairman John Boozman (R-Ark.), on behalf of the Edge Political Action Committee. Opportunities to connect with leaders in Congress, their staff and other allied industries opens doors for new relationships, coalitions and advocacy opportunities. Members' generous PAC contributions make these opportunities possible and provide us with potential new allies to advocate on behalf of our members.

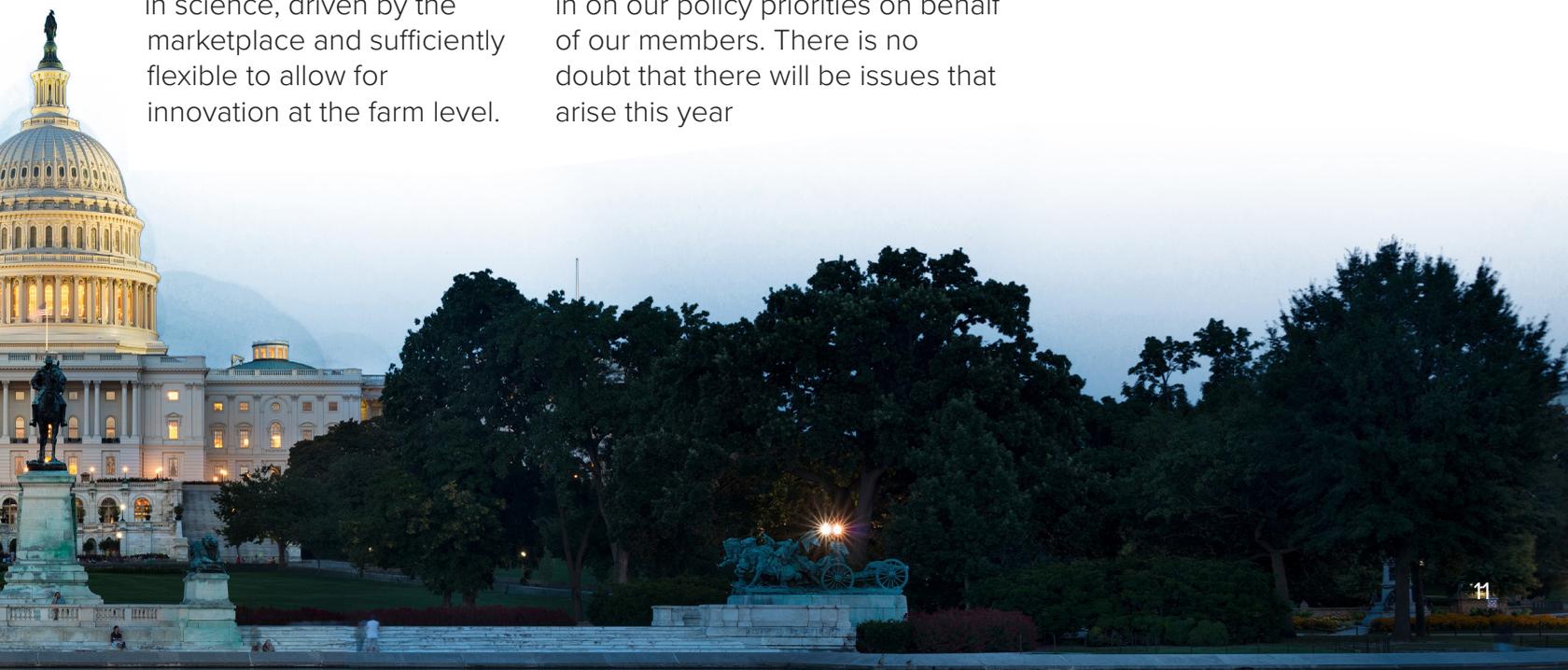
As we continue into what is shaping up to be a whirl-wind Congressional session with many high-level issues to tackle, the Edge team and advisors will be tracking, strategizing and weighing in on our policy priorities on behalf of our members. There is no doubt that there will be issues that arise this year



Edge staff, Karen Gefvert and Lucas Sjostrom, meet with Congresswoman Angie Craig (D-Minn.), Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee.

that will require a louder voice — your voice. As those issues arise and the timing is right, watch for our issue action alerts. We will need many voices to weigh in on important issues like the farm bill, rural workforce, trade and programs and services that farmers utilize.

If ever we can be of assistance or if there are questions, please reach out to me at kgefvert@voiceofmilk.com. 📧



Engaging with Wisconsin's Policymakers: Advocating for the future of dairy farming



Chad Zuleger
Director of
government affairs

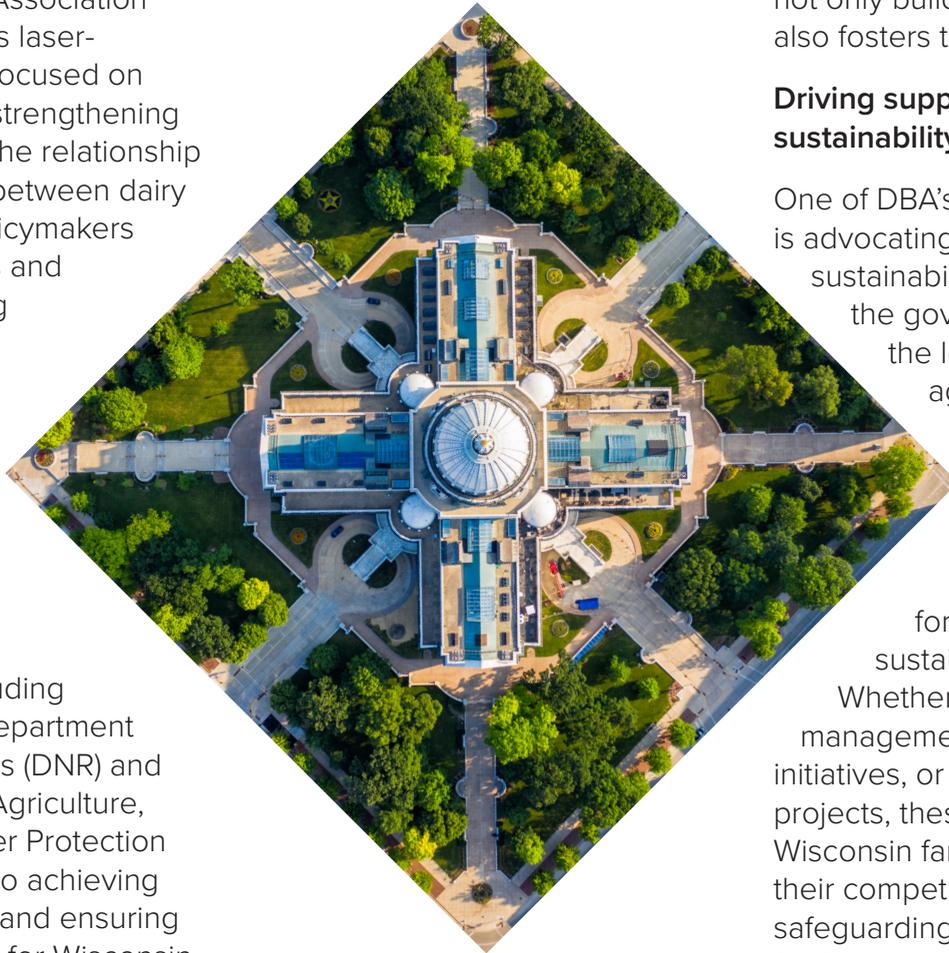
As we look into the 2025-26 legislative session in Wisconsin, the Dairy Business Association is laser-focused on strengthening the relationship between dairy

farmers and the policymakers who shape the laws and regulations affecting our industry. Active engagement with your state lawmakers—those serving in the Wisconsin State Assembly, State Senate and the Governor's Administration, including agencies like the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)—is critical to achieving our policy priorities and ensuring a prosperous future for Wisconsin dairy farming.

Why engaging with elected officials matters

The individuals elected to represent us in Madison wield significant influence over the policies that impact dairy farmers' day-to-day operations and long-term success. From shaping funding decisions to drafting

regulations, their work directly affects the sustainability and growth of our industry. Building relationships with these lawmakers and agency officials ensures



that they understand the challenges we face and the opportunities they can help create for Wisconsin's dairy community.

When farmers engage with legislators and key government agencies, they put a human face on the issues. Conversations about sustainability practices,

infrastructure funding and the regulatory environment are much more impactful when legislators hear firsthand stories about how these issues play out on your farms. This personal connection not only builds understanding but also fosters trust and collaboration.

Driving support for agricultural sustainability

One of DBA's core priorities is advocating for agricultural sustainability. By working with the governor's administration, the legislature, and agencies like DATCP and the DNR, we advocate for policies that provide incentives and resources for implementing sustainable practices. Whether it's nutrient management, water quality initiatives, or renewable energy projects, these programs help Wisconsin farmers maintain their competitive edge while safeguarding our natural resources for future generations.

Elected officials play a key role in funding and supporting these initiatives. It's critical that lawmakers understand how sustainable farming practices benefit not just farmers but also the broader community through environmental stewardship and economic growth.

Advocating for better transportation funding

Efficient transportation is the backbone of Wisconsin's dairy industry. From hauling milk to market to receiving feed and supplies, dairy farmers depend on well-maintained roads and bridges to keep their operations running smoothly. DBA is working to ensure that lawmakers prioritize funding for rural infrastructure in the state budget.

Legislators need to hear directly from farmers about how infrastructure issues—like deteriorating roads or insufficient transportation funding—can disrupt operations and increase costs.

Promoting sensible, common-sense regulation

Overly complex or burdensome regulations can make it harder for farmers to innovate and succeed. That's why DBA continues to work closely with state lawmakers, the governor's administration, and agencies like DATCP and the DNR to advocate for clear, practical, and business-friendly regulations.

When you meet with elected officials or attend public hearings and local listening sessions, you help shape the conversation around regulation. Explaining how rules impact your farm operations, from permitting processes to environmental compliance, is

Amplify Your Voice... support DairyPAC!



Another way to make a meaningful impact is by contributing to DairyPAC, DBA's political action committee.

DairyPAC enables us to support candidates who champion policies that align with our priorities. By pooling our resources, we can ensure that the voices of 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.

invaluable in helping lawmakers craft policies that are both effective and reasonable.

Dairy Day at the Capitol: Your chance to make a difference

Join us on April 16, 2025 in Madison for Dairy Day at the Capitol. This annual event is your opportunity to meet face-to-face with state lawmakers and agency officials. Together, we'll advocate for our shared priorities, discuss the challenges facing dairy farmers, and demonstrate the vital role our industry plays in Wisconsin's economy.

Your presence at Dairy Day sends a powerful message: Wisconsin's dairy farmers are engaged, informed, and ready to work collaboratively with decision-makers to build a better future for agriculture.

Together, we shape the future

As Wisconsin's dairy farmers, you are the backbone of our state's agricultural economy. Engaging with elected officials and government agencies ensures that your needs and priorities remain front and center in the policymaking process. From sustainability initiatives to transportation funding and regulatory reform, the Dairy Business Association relies on your active participation to drive meaningful change.

For more information about our current policy priorities, visit dairyforward.com. 

Minnesota Milk presents 2025 legislative priorities



Lucas Sjostrom
Executive director of
MN Milk

Minnesota Milk has outlined its 2025 legislative priorities, emphasizing policies that support dairy farmers and ensure the long-term stability of the

industry. These priorities address critical areas, including workplace management, agricultural exemptions, feedlot regulations, infrastructure investments, and research funding.

Better Workplace Management

Minnesota implemented new labor mandates, workplace restrictions, and business taxes last session, significantly increasing the cost of doing business. Dairy farmers are advocating for the following changes:

- **An Agricultural Exemption to ESST** – Dairy farms operate differently from traditional workplaces, as their schedules are dictated by weather conditions and cow biology. Smaller dairy farms, particularly those with fewer than five full-

time employees (FTEs), often lack dedicated HR personnel. Minnesota Milk requests an exemption from the ESST law for these farms.

- **Delaying the Paid Family and Medical Leave Law** – The current law requires further refinement before its implementation. The legislature should review the total number of weeks, benefit formulas, and seasonal worker definitions. Dairy farmers should either be exempted or allowed to provide benefits through alternative methods.
- **Further Delay or Agricultural Exemption for the Secure Choice Retirement Plan** – While the plan is simple in design, its implementation has proven confusing for employers. Delaying its rollout is an example of how other workplace laws could also be improved before enforcement.

DAIRI Program and the Future of the Farm Bill

Minnesota Milk supports holding DAIRI funds until a new farm bill is approved. The DAIRI program has demonstrated strong returns on investment for state dollars, working in conjunction with federal programs. However, delays in the farm bill process—marked by two one-year extensions—have created uncertainty. DAIRI funding should remain tied to a five-year Dairy Margin

Coverage (DMC) program signup, authorized by a new farm bill.

Feedlot Rules and Regulations

Minnesota Milk advocates for optimizing feedlot regulations to support family farm growth. Key priorities include:

- Allowing county and local feedlot permit applications to be accepted concurrently with environmental reviews.
- Opposing the reopening of the 7020 Feedlot Rules, which could impose additional regulatory burdens on dairy farmers.

Infrastructure Investments

Minnesota Milk supports strategic infrastructure investments that benefit dairy farmers and processing plants. These investments should focus on:

- Electrical systems
- Wastewater management
- Roads and bridges

Minnesota's \$9.3 billion dairy industry supports 25,000 jobs, making these infrastructure improvements a critical priority for maintaining market access and economic stability.

Agricultural Research and Education

Minnesota Milk backs the University of Minnesota's reinvestment in the St. Paul Campus and FAARM. As a Land Grant institution, the university should continue prioritizing



livestock agriculture research to support dairy farmers and advance the industry.

By addressing these legislative priorities, Minnesota Milk aims to create a more stable and prosperous future for the state's dairy community. These initiatives reflect the ongoing commitment to ensuring dairy farming remains a vital part of Minnesota's economy and agricultural landscape.



**BE HEARD.
BE CONNECTED.
BE SUPPORTED.**

Since 1977, Minnesota Milk has been the trusted voice of dairy farmers—advocating, educating, and representing you where it matters most.

From policy influence to crisis support, media training to networking—your membership powers it all.

When you join Minnesota Milk, you're not just investing in your farm. You're investing in the future of Minnesota's dairy industry.

Join today at www.mnmilk.org.

Market Numbers

Producer Milk by Class — February 2025									
	Federal Order 30			Federal Order 33			Federal Order 126		
	%	Product Pounds	Price \$/cwt.	%	Product Pounds	Price \$/cwt.	%	Product Pounds	Price \$/cwt.
Class I	7.00	151,462,746	\$23.07	33.35	559,223,884	\$23.27	26.85	309,509,881	\$24.27
Class II	1.20	26,146,105	\$21.08	18.37	308,010,551	\$21.08	9.79	112,897,031	\$21.08
Class III	86.60	1,881,757,169	\$20.18	36.07	604,883,192	\$20.18	32.47	374,220,289	\$20.18
Class IV	5.20	114,545,464	\$19.90	12.21	204,774,111	\$19.90	30.89	356,084,281	\$19.90
Total*		2,173,911,484			1,676,891,738			1,152,711,482	
Total Value =		\$524,756,171.64			\$411,516,575			\$285,360,149	

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.)
Nov-23	\$0.33	\$17.48	\$2.12	\$19.27	\$2.19	\$19.34	3.4608	1.008	0.1895	0.00087
Dec-23	\$0.36	\$16.40	\$2.16	\$18.20	\$2.33	\$18.37	2.9778	1.0144	0.2242	0.00081
Jan-24	\$0.42	\$15.59	\$2.73	\$17.90	\$2.56	\$17.73	2.9765	1.033	0.2417	0.00076
Feb-24	\$0.32	\$16.40	\$1.88	\$17.96	\$2.10	\$18.18	3.1031	1.0343	0.2738	0.0008
Mar-24	\$0.36	\$16.70	\$2.30	\$18.64	\$2.14	\$18.48	3.2385	1.0083	0.2881	0.00078
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

Federal Order Summary — February 2025							
Federal Order No.	Name	Producer Deliveries	Class I Producer Receipts	Class I Utilization	Class I Price	Producer Price Differential	Change From Previous Year
		*** Thousand Pounds ***		%		***** Dollars per Cwt. *****	
1	Northeast	2,122,123	608,069	28.6	24.5	\$1.46	(\$2.15)
5	Appalachian	392,894	286,381	72.9	\$24.67	*NA	*NA
6	Florida	201,895	163,359	80.9	\$26.67	*NA	*NA
7	Southeast	294,532	205,145	69.7	\$25.07	*NA	*NA
30	Upper Midwest	2,173,911	151,463	7.0	\$23.07	\$0.13	(\$0.19)
32	Central	1,157,404	332,990	28.8	\$23.27	\$0.16	(\$1.43)
33	Midwest	1,676,892	559,224	33.4	\$23.27	\$0.64	(\$1.24)
51	California	2,456,950	369,078	15.0	\$23.37	\$0.36	(\$0.97)
124	Pacific Northwest	618,029	116,433	18.8	\$23.17	\$0.14	(\$1.74)
126	Southwest	1,152,711	309,510	26.9	\$24.27	\$0.92	(\$1.18)
131	Arizona	402,436	114,366	28.4	\$23.62	*NA	*NA
All Market Average or Total		12,649,777	3,216,018	25.4%			



Local involvement leads to success



Erin Tomasik
*Community relations
manager*

Now, more than ever, it is imperative for the agricultural community to get involved in their local government. Burdensome ordinance proposals are continuing to gain in popularity, impacting farms of all sizes through operation ordinances, manure hauling or storage ordinances, zoning restrictions and more. It is important for farmers to engage in local communities and get involved in these discussions.

Last fall, St. Croix County, Wis., Land and Water Conservation Department proposed modifications to their Manure Storage Ordinance. The proposed modifications were unexpected and did not align with what was communicated to the local farmers. Language that included daily records of manure pit inputs, submitting signed land contract agreements and submitting the SNAP Plus database files, were all included in the draft ordinance. In November, nearly 50 farmers in the county rallied together at Bomaz Farms and discussed the impact this language would have on future farming operations and the changes that needed to be made. From that meeting, farmers in the county continued to attend county

committee meetings and voiced their concerns, ultimately leading to the removal of most of the detrimental language. After months of advocating, the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a better version of their ordinance that continues to protect their waters and preserve their livestock farming community.

Similarly, last fall a farm in Chippewa County applied for their conditional use permit to expand their operations and add in more animal units. During the public hearing community members voiced their concerns including the spreading of misinformation concerning the farm. At the next committee meeting, the county asked the DNR Ag Runoff Specialist and UW-Stevens Point's Extension Water Specialist to present information to address the community's concerns.

Both presentations provided the committee with factual information that ultimately resulted in the farm being approved for their conditional use permit.

Conversations about farms and agricultural operations are occurring in many towns and counties around Wisconsin. In the northwest portion of the state, operation ordinances are being proposed and passing at an alarming rate. Towns in Pierce, Sawyer and Polk County have passed ordinances, some requiring expensive and excessive permits beginning at 500 animal units. In the southeast corner of the state community members are attempting to limit farm sizes through zoning that prohibit operations of 1,000 animal units or more.

It is important for farmers to stay aware and informed of potential local proposals impacting agriculture. The Voice of Milk is here to advocate on behalf of our members and assist in responding to local issues. Reach out to me at etomasik@voiceofmilk.com if you have local issues we should be aware of or if we can assist in any way. 🤝



An update on the Corporate Transparency Act

Written by Ruder Ware Attorneys: Amy Ebeling, Jake Schraeder and Morgan Sweeney

What is the Corporate Transparency Act?

The Corporate Transparency Act (“CTA”) was enacted as a part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 after the House of Representatives voted 322-87 and the Senate voted 81-13 to override President Trump’s veto of the defense bill.

Effective January 1, 2024, the CTA requires “beneficial owners” of “reporting companies” to disclose personal information to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (“FinCEN”). This information is disclosed by submitting a “Beneficial Ownership Information Report” (“BOIR”). These disclosures aim to combat financial crimes, money laundering, and terrorism financing by enhancing transparency in corporate ownership structures.

As a general rule, if an entity was formed by filing a document with a government office, it is a “reporting company” and must comply with the CTA requirements. There are, however, exemptions to this general rule. For instance, banks, credit unions, insurance companies, and certain types of tax-exempt entities likely qualify for an exemption. There are 23 total exemptions for which a reporting company may qualify. If no exemption applies, then an entity must report personal information about each of its beneficial owners.

A BOIR discloses personal information about the “beneficial owners” of your entity. This defined term is slightly misleading in that a beneficial owner does not need to be an owner of the entity. Instead, a “beneficial owner” is any individual who, directly or indirectly, (1) exercises substantial control over a reporting company or (2) owns or controls at least 25 percent of the ownership interests of the reporting company. Despite the clarity of the second prong, analyzing “substantial control” under the first prong can be challenging given the novelty of the law.

CTA’s court challenges

Since the CTA came into effect, it has faced several court challenges, increasing the difficulty for potential reporting companies to navigate compliance. Two of the most notable court challenges began in federal district courts in Texas.

One, *Texas Top Cop Shop, Inc., et al. v. McHenry, et al.*, was the first instance of a federal district court blocking enforcement of the CTA. In early December 2024, a federal district court in Texas issued a landmark decision postponing the enforcement of the CTA. The Court held that the CTA exceeded Congress’ power and was therefore likely unconstitutional. However, after an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, the block on the CTA was paused. Currently, the parties are working through a briefing schedule set by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals,

culminating in oral arguments on March 25, 2025.

Even after the Supreme Court paused the block on CTA’s enforcement, reporting companies were still not required to file due to another Texas federal district court case, *Smith, et al. v. U.S. Department of Treasury, et al.* However, the block was later lifted, and the CTA and its reporting requirements were once again back in effect, but not for long.

Pending legislative action

While the federal courts were evaluating the enforcement of the CTA, the legislator introduced two pieces of relevant legislation.

The “Repealing Big Brother Overreach Act,” which seeks to repeal the CTA, was reintroduced on January 15, 2025. The bill’s mission is to eliminate the CTA’s reporting requirements. As of now, the House of Representatives has not passed the bill. It is uncertain whether this bill will have sufficient support moving forward.

Another bill was introduced on January 24, 2025, titled the “Protect Small Businesses from Excessive Paperwork Act.” The bill seeks to extend the CTA’s reporting deadline to January 1, 2026. Despite being introduced later than the Repealing Big Brother Overreach Act, the bill was passed by the House of Representative with a unanimous vote and now moves to the Senate. On February

Continues on page 18.

Continued from page 17.

11, the Senate referred the bill to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Where Does CTA Stand Today?

Most recently, the U.S. Department of the Treasury suspended enforcement of CTA for U.S. citizens and domestic reporting companies. On March 2, 2025, the Treasury announced that U.S. citizens and domestic reporting companies will no longer face penalties or fines for failure to report under the CTA.

In its announcement, the Treasury stated it plans to issue a proposed rulemaking that will narrow the reporting requirements only to foreign reporting companies. The Treasury stated that the proposed rule is “in the interest of supporting hard-working American taxpayers and small businesses and ensuring that the rule is appropriately tailored to advance the public interest.”

Although the Treasury will not impose penalties or fines on U.S. citizens or domestic reporting companies, an obligation to file remains. Accordingly, we hope to hear a definitive ruling in the near future. In the meantime, it is crucial to stay informed on the ever-evolving status of the CTA. 🗣️



Balancing conservation practices and profitability in dairy farming



Tina LeBrun, the executive director of the MN State Southern Agricultural Center of Excellence for MN State Colleges and Universities speaks at Dairy Strong.

Attendees at the 2025 Dairy Strong conference had the opportunity to hear from Tina LeBrun, the executive director of the Minnesota State Southern Agricultural Center of Excellence for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

Through her work with the Farm Business Management program, LeBrun assists farmers in making data-driven decisions to achieve their business goals by utilizing FINPACK business analysis.

“The biggest misconception we see in Farm Business Management is that farmers are working with us because they need help,” LeBrun said. “That’s not the case. In fact, the farms we work with are actually quite profitable.”

Recently, an opportunity arose to contribute to the climate-smart efforts, which are gaining momentum across the ag industry.

It’s more important than ever to measure what farmers are

doing and understand the benefits these practices have in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

It’s critical that climate-smart farming practices are an economically viable solution for the farm’s long-term sustainability, she said.

The desire to connect financial sustainability with environmental sustainability led to the formation of the Headwaters Agriculture Sustainability Partnership (HASP).

Dairy farmers in Minnesota and Wisconsin are examining the connection between environmental sustainability and economic viability. A group of 19 farmers located in Central Minnesota and Wisconsin enrolled in a project with Edge Dairy farmer Cooperative recently completed their first financial report based on performance in 2023.

“What I’m finding with our reports was that weather was such a driver,” she said. “That’s why we need to look at multiple years because weather can have such an impact on cover crops.”

As the program progresses into the coming years, LeBrun says it will look to continue expanding, aiming to identify new partnerships and opportunities in the future. 🗣️

Farmers for Sustainable Food unveils results from the inaugural year of Climate-Smart Program

Farmers in the Upper Midwest are utilizing actionable data to make informed decisions about the conservation practices implemented on their farms. Results from the inaugural year of the Farmers for Sustainable Food Climate-Smart Program were unveiled at the Dairy Business Association's 2025 Dairy Strong conference, showing that these sustainable farming practices are achieving positive environmental outcomes.

The first year of the FSF Climate-Smart Program shows promising results as part of a five-year effort to empower farmers and add value throughout the supply chain. The initiative builds off a nationally recognized model, FSF's Framework for Farm-Level Sustainability Projects, which helps farmers determine what conservation practices are most effective for their individual farms and provides tools to document the environmental and financial effects.

In 2024, the program consisted of five projects with 53 farms in Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota that participated in data collection and analysis regarding their 2023 crop-year

information. In total, the program encompassed 100,193 acres of cropland and 71,686 head of cattle.

"We are encouraged by the amount of farmer engagement we received in our first year. These farms are making a difference, and when we aggregate the results, we show the important impact they are making," Lauren Brey, FSF managing director, said.

Farmers enrolled in the FSF Climate-Smart Program receive individual reports showing key metrics for their farms. Aggregated results from year one of the program demonstrate the broad, positive environmental impact of sustainable farming practices.

The data captured from those enrolled in the first year of the project showed that the farms reduced 49,161 tonnes of CO₂e per year from implementation of cropland best management practices, or on average, 0.49 tonnes of CO₂e per acre per year. This is equivalent to powering 6,602 U.S. homes for one year or removing 11,467 U.S. passenger vehicles from the road. In comparison, the reduction on the farms is comparable to the amount of CO₂e that nearly 49,311 acres of

forestland remove each year.

Data was analyzed by Houston Engineering, Inc. using COMET-Planner.

"Having the ability to see the impact my farming practices are making on a yearly basis helps me make better decisions," Paul Cornette, dairy farmer and FSF board president, said. "Through the FSF Climate-Smart program, I have been able to track my individual metrics as well as compare them to the group to see where I can improve or may be ahead of the curve."

"We are very encouraged with the number of farmers interested in participating in our program," Brey says. "This level of engagement illustrates the desire farmers have to not only incorporate conservation practices, but more importantly to have metrics about the impact of those practices to inform future cropping decisions. We are fortunate to work with such progressive and engaged farmers."

For more information about the FSF Climate-Smart Program, visit farmersforsustainablefood.com. 



Permitting updates for the new year



Tim Baumgartner
Director of
regulatory &
permitting services

Now that 2025 is here, we begin another year for the calendar permitting cycle. The DNR has held several update meetings across the state in January and February.

While there have not been numerous changes, a very noteworthy change coming in 2026 relates to added land substantial revisions. Historically, if a farm were to add land into their eligible acres, the department has allowed them to use the P101 value to determine manure application levels if there was not a current soil analysis for the added acreage (soil analysis within last four years). Due to the DNR's perspective that they are seeing increasing levels of soil samples being out of compliance, they are going to restrict land that does not have a current soil sample analysis and will not allow the P101 value to be utilized on added land starting in 2026.

This policy change or enforcement was rolled out to start immediately in 2025, and for those of you who went to the first couple of update meetings at the end of January, this may sound different than what you heard. Our permitting and regulatory department was successful through discussions with DNR staff to allow farms to be able to respond to this change more appropriately in 2026. By announcing the change at the update meetings this winter, farms that had secured land before year-end or since the first of the year will not have the opportunity to have samples taken to allow them to utilize the land for spreading this spring/summer. Waiting until 2026 allows farms that are looking at added land through a substantial revision this year to be able to apply nutrients to the land this spring and then get soil samples in the fall to maintain compliance.

The DNR will be adding updating soil samples on fields with outdated soil sample submissions to your CAFO compliance schedule. If they are not updated, the fields will not be eligible spreadable acres in the future.

Additional items discussed at the meeting were preparing for DNR farm visits and repair/maintenance on feed pads and bunkers. It is good practice to keep your farm site inspection ready.

Utilizing the CAFO resources for production area monitoring and making sure all team members understand the expectation for cleanliness and maintenance is critical.

When it comes to feeding pads and bunkers, repairing cracked and damaged concrete needs to be done routinely. If these repairs are put off long enough a simple repair could become a situation where a plans, spec review and approval is needed from the DNR if the damage is extensive or if it has affected subsurface material.

When inspecting your manure storage, feed storage, runoff control, and, if applicable, outdoor lots, make sure to take the time and do your due diligence when reviewing and assessing these areas. Also, make sure your walkaround includes the full production area. 📍



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Contact Us

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Director of Regulatory & Permitting Services
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Custom manure handling helps farms adhere to regulations



D.J. Buck,
Minnesota Milk Member

Minnesota dairy farmers pride themselves on protecting the water and natural resources on their farms

and neighboring communities. As such, they work to implement new technologies and practices that help balance livestock production and environmental protection. The proper management of nutrients from the farm is one of the most critical components and one that farms take seriously. It's already well-regulated through county feedlot laws, state feedlot rules and the extensive 30-page NPDES permit book for farms with over 715 cows.

"We have a narrow window of time to get on the fields to incorporate the manure, so we have to do it as efficiently as possible," says D.J. Buck, a dairy farmer from Goodhue. "We work with a number of farms in the area to be sure they are handling the manure properly."

D.J. Buck and his family have been in the dairy business since

1991 when his parents started a 70-cow dairy farm. Through slow growth and the addition of other family members, the dairy farm has grown to two farms with a total of 1,400 cows. As the farm grew, D.J. and his brother, Chris, assumed more of the farm management. In 2013 they started a manure management business to help neighboring farms. The company began when the brothers were looking for more land to handle their growing herd.

"The window we have to apply manure on the fields is shrinking," D.J. says. "Between the weather and the changing regulations, we are limited in time to get on the fields."

The tight window of time required D.J. to invest in more equipment so he could use draglines and directly incorporate the nutrients into the soil to reduce odor and any potential run-off. Due to the expense of the equipment, they decided to work for other farmers to help offset their investment.

"We use dragline applications in the spring before planting the crops," he says. "The draglines

allow us to go 5-6 miles without being on the roads and they have zero risk of a spill on the roads. Plus, it has less impact on the field."

Minnesota Milk and the legislature worked together in 2017 to keep trucks off the road by ensuring draglines can safely and efficiently utilize rights-of-way to move manure through these large hoses.

Along with the field application, D.J. also helps design lagoons and works with farmers to ensure that their manure testing is current and applications are appropriate for their soil types.

We have found that diversification works well for us," D.J. says. "Having the manure management business and some custom chopping along with 500 head feedlot and the dairy gives us a steady income throughout the year without relying on the milk price." 



FMMO referendum passage announced at Dairy Strong

Attendees at the 2025 Dairy Strong conference heard from Dana Coale, deputy administrator for USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, regarding the passage of the referendum of the final Federal Milk Marketing Order rule.

The rule ensures the continuation of FMMOs, a program aimed at providing business assurances for dairy farmers and processors.

"The federal order price was never intended to be the effective price," Coale said. "It's supposed to be a minimum, influenced by supply and demand."

The referendum comes after AMS held a 49-day hearing to hear from witnesses and evaluate changes.

"We're trying to get at a minimum fair value across the system and it's hard; it's not simple," she said.

Coale announced that producers in each of the 11 federal orders approved the following pricing formula amendments:

- Updating the skim milk composition factors to 3.3 percent true protein, 6 percent other solids and 9.3 percent nonfat solids.
- Removing 500-pound barrel cheddar cheese prices from the Dairy Product Mandatory Reporting Program survey.
- Updating the Class III and Class IV manufacturing allowances to \$0.2519 for cheese, \$0.2272 for butter, \$0.2393 for nonfat dry milk and \$0.2668 for dry whey, all on a per pound basis, and the butterfat recovery factor to 91 percent.
- Returning the base Class I skim milk price formula to the higher-of the advanced Class III or

Class IV skim milk prices for the month. In addition, adoption of a Class I extended shelf life (ESL) adjustment for all ESL products equal to the average-of mover plus a 24-month rolling average adjuster with a 12-month lag.

- Updating the Class I differential values to reflect the increased cost of servicing the Class I market.

Heidi Fischer, president of Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative, said the cooperative's members, board and staff have remained closely engaged in the reform process, from submitting producer testimonials to advocating for change that positively affects producers.

"We are encouraged by this positive outcome that the vitality and importance of Federal Orders remains," Fischer said during a press conference at Dairy Strong. "And while there is always more to do to keep the orders relevant and purposeful, at this juncture we are encouraged that the FMMO will continue to provide the market stability needed for both producers and processors."

The rule will be effective June 1, 2025, for all changes except for those to the skim milk composition factors. The amendments to skim milk composition factors will be implemented Dec. 1, 2025. These changes will apply to milk marketed on and after these

"While there is always more to do to keep the orders relevant and purposeful, at this juncture we are encouraged that the FMMO will continue to provide the market stability needed for both producers and processors."

-Heidi Fischer
Board President, Edge



Dairy markets look mixed heading into 2025

dates, as applicable, and those changes will be reflected in both the advanced prices and pricing factors released before the start of the month and the class and component prices announced after the close of the month.

“We are pleased with this announcement, but also recognize there is more to be done,” Edge CEO Tim Trotter said. “We are glad that AMS recognized the importance of risk management, through the introduction of ESL pricing for beverage milk, and lag for implementation of higher skim component tests. More work should be done to improve milk check transparency so dairy farmers know if their milk is pooled or not pooled. We hope all future changes will also be done in a way that does not interfere with other USDA programs that benefit dairy farmers, such as livestock insurance.”

Edge will continue to monitor the implementation of the new rules and stay engaged with the farmers and processors these changes affect, Trotter said. 📌

Trying to predict what the dairy market will do in 2025 is not easy. There’s the threat of higher tariffs, the danger of avian influenza and losing employees due to immigration reform, but there’s also room for growth.



During a 2025 dairy market outlook presentation at Dairy Strong, Mike North, president of Ever.Ag, said tariffs are a big deal for farmers and something they should pay attention to since it may decrease exports and lead to lower sales.

North said it is possible the government may supplement farmers’ income if tariffs hit the industry hard. “I know no one likes a handout but we may need it to get through this,” he said.

Dr. Marin Bozic, Edge board advisor, said that dairy trade is just a fraction of all agricultural trade, and that agricultural trade is small relative to overall US international trade.

“It is likely that the Trump administration will look to reduce overall US trade deficit, but I am confident farmers will be made whole against short-term turmoil such reset may cause,” he said.

Immigration reform is another concern among farmers who

worry about losing some of their workforce. Here too, Bozic said the president may look elsewhere for changes, knowing how much farmers rely on immigration for their labor.

Farmers have been concerned about immigration and their workforces since the late 2000s, North said.

“We keep looking for a solution and I’m not sure we’ll find one in the next four years. I agree with Marin that we won’t see any big changes because the Republicans in Congress need the votes of farmers again in two years,” he said.

Avian influenza is another threat to the dairy industry. California’s cow herds have been hit hard by bird flu and North predicts the disease will show up in Wisconsin. Infected cows produce less milk and most recover with treatment. Milk from infected cows can be safely used if it undergoes pasteurization.

“We need to be prepared,” he said.

Growth Outlook

While the industry has challenges, North said there are several positives in the dairy market, such as the growth in consumption of protein shakes and bars.

“We’ve seen 20% of whey production growth due to the popularity of protein products,” he said. “It’s a nice addition to the market.” 📌

Meet our new DBA board members



Amy Penterman | *Dutch Dairy, Thorp*

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I have been a licensed crop insurance agent for 28 years, working from my home office on our family dairy farm. My husband and I farm in Thorp and milk 1,000 cows. I am involved in the management of our dairy and human resources. We have five children, three of whom are still in school. I am active with our community, serving on the school board and active with our FFA alumni. When I'm not working or attending sporting events, I do a little amateur photography.

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

Working in the agricultural community and farming ourselves, I know the value of having our voice at the table in Madison and beyond. Working with farmers daily, I see and hear the challenges they are facing. It is important for our lawmakers to hear from us.

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

I look forward to meeting farmers across the state, getting to know the challenges farmers are facing, finding solutions and having the voices of farmers heard in Madison. I look forward to showcasing the good work farmers are doing. We have a history of agriculture in our state; we are the backbone of many of our rural communities, and we must protect our legacy for future generations to come. I am honored to serve on the board and looking forward to it.



Duane Ducat | *Deer Run Dairy, Kewaunee*

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I farm in Kewaunee, Wis., with partners Derek Ducat and Dale Bogart. At Deer Run Dairy, we milk 1,800 cows and manage 3,200 crop acres. I also have a background in nuclear power. I worked at a nuclear power plant for 44 years before retiring from the plant in 2021.

Sustainability is extremely important to me and our farm. In 2012, we built a digester on our farm, which allows us to use separated manure solids for bedding. I'm an active member and board president of Peninsula Pride Farms, a farmer-led group in Door and Kewaunee counties. This allows me to connect with other farmers committed to sustainable farming. I'm also involved with other organizations, including Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative, Farmers for Sustainable Food and Wisconsin Farm Bureau.

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

I am dedicated to DBA because of the organization's commitment to the dairy community, which includes farmers and industry partners. DBA was established when dairy farmers needed a stronger voice and an organization focused on improving the dairy industry, and that's still needed today. Together, we are moving dairy forward, and I want to take part in sharing my story with legislators.

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

I'm excited about this opportunity to support the board and our organization however I can. I want to give back to a community that has been so supportive of my family and our livelihood. I believe I will learn a great deal, and I look forward to sharing my experiences serving on the DBA board.



Greg Siegenthaler, DBA President | *Grande Cheese, Fond du Lac*

Tell us a bit about yourself and Grande Cheese.

I'm truly honored and humbled to serve you in leading the best dairy advocacy organization in Wisconsin. Growing up on a dairy farm in Lafayette County, which has been in our family for 150 years, I have been involved in agriculture my entire life. Upon graduating from college, I started working for Grande as a producer services representative in 1990. Since then, I've worked in various roles within the company, currently as the vice president of milk marketing, sustainability and strategic sourcing. The teams I lead are responsible for sourcing everything we need to make "The Finest Italian Cheeses Money Can Buy®" including all direct materials (milk, packaging, natural gas, etc.) and indirect materials (services) necessary from the farm to the customer. My teams also market the byproducts of milk not required for certain products, such as surplus butterfat/cream, whey, etc.

Grande was founded in 1941 by Italian immigrants. The guiding principles of integrity and heartfelt devotion to the craft of making authentic Italian cheeses have been the bedrock of Grande's growth and success. In our 84 years, we have grown to become an industry leader within the Wisconsin agricultural community and a nationally established brand.

Tell us why you are committed to the organization and what it means to Grande Cheese.

It is important to know that Grande is committed to a producer-direct milk supply to support our growing business. With that, Grande was excited to witness DBA's creation 25 years ago and we have participated in supporting the organization each step of the way. DBA's principles align closely with Grande's Social Responsibility pillars of Business Sustainability, Environmental Awareness, Associates, and Community Involvement. As a processor who has all our manufacturing assets in Wisconsin, it is important to note that the success of Wisconsin's dairy farmers is critical to the success of Grande. Without the farmers' success, Grande's business continuity is at risk.

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

Twenty-five years ago, the legacy of Wisconsin maintaining the "America's Dairyland" title was at risk. Cow numbers were declining, California was capturing dairy market share, and it was a challenge for progressive-minded dairy producers to grow in Wisconsin. As for Grande, at that time, we were a smaller company, yet we found ourselves stretching our milk procurement perimeter to encompass five states to ensure delivery of the high-quality raw milk required to support our business. Fast forward to today and Wisconsin's industry has experienced impressive growth. Since 2000, Wisconsin has added 25 million pounds per day of new milk production, outpacing California's 19 million pounds per day. At Grande, we now only have to reach ~50 miles from each manufacturing plant to secure our milk requirements. In today's milk procurement environment, producers are fewer, larger, more business savvy and most have plans for continued growth. This is exciting for our industry and Wisconsin. Quite frankly, we are in a position that I wasn't sure was possible 25 years ago. DBA deserves much credit for clearing a political and regulatory path for this impressive growth. At the 25-year mark, it is appropriate to stop and reflect on the journey, but it's no time to be complacent, as both challenges and opportunities continue to lie ahead. Wisconsin and the U.S. dairy industry have tremendous opportunities to support a growing global demand for dairy products. But to capture this opportunity we must think and work more collaboratively between farmers and processors. These relationships must grow to establish better business transparency and communications. Twenty-five years ago, the farmer may have watched their milk leave the driveway with little regard for where it went or the consumer it touched. Today, it's critically important to understand the milk journey, processing complexities, and ultimately, the customer's needs/expectations. Twenty-five years ago, the relationship between producer and processor was largely gauged by what they put in the tank (quality, volume, etc.). Moving forward, more intentionality must be provided by the producer and processor to align bi-directional business to business needs and expectations. This will be uncomfortable for both sides initially, but if we are to continue to elevate Wisconsin as "the" dairy state, it is critical that we think about the business relationships more proactively.

What are you looking forward to the most in your role as president?

I'm not quite sure where the time has gone, but my 35 years of working in this great industry have convinced me that the best years lie ahead of us. It is through the combined motivation and optimism of all DBA members that we will continue to advance our industry for the betterment of farmers, processors, the environment, communities, and employees. Thank you again for the opportunity to be a part of your success.

Meet our new Edge board members



Christina Zuiderveen | *Black Soil Dairy, Northwest Iowa*

Tell us a bit about yourself.

My husband and I both grew up on dairy farms in California and Michigan. We have 3 children: Audrey, Janelle and Jacob. We moved to Iowa 13 years ago when we did a remodel project on our dairy. We work closely with my brother, who is just across the state line in Beresford, South Dakota. Our home farm milks about 2,700 cows and we are building a second site nearby that will milk about 6,000 head. My role on the farm is primarily in the business side of things and a lot of HR-related items, including visa applications and employee housing.

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

I have been very appreciative of Edge and the relationship we have formed over the last few years. My first time working with a lot of the team was when I testified before the Senate Sub-committee calling for reform to the FMMO a few years ago, and the team was helpful in making sure I felt well-prepared. I enjoyed the process and was encouraged to become more involved in policy at both the state and federal levels. It is valuable for my farm to have a voice in D.C., and I enjoy the process of helping share my story. I'm appreciative of the information and resources that Edge continually provides members through webinars, newsletters and other resources.

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

I'm looking forward to learning more about the inner workings of our cooperative. As an Iowan, I'm very familiar with the industry and people in the I-29 corridor, but I do not have much experience or relationships with the Wisconsin region. I look forward to all the new networking opportunities and to learning about some of the differences between the two regions.

Meet our new MN Milk board member



Dean Smith | *D&D Dairy, Rushford*

Tell us a bit about yourself.

After college, I began working on the farm with my dad in 1995. Our family started dairy farming in 1979. Over the years, we have expanded our operations, and now we milk about 1,200 cows near Rushford. I work alongside my brothers, Greg and Randy, who are all involved in different aspects of the business.

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

I have been a member of Minnesota Milk for quite some time. Although I haven't always been very involved in politics, I believe it is our responsibility to advocate for our farm. If we don't speak up, no one else will. I strive to be active and provide a strong voice for the dairy community.

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

I'm eager to get to know more of our members and connect with my fellow board members. I'm also excited to become more involved by engaging in more events, like Dairy Day at the Capitol and other opportunities. I look forward to gaining further insight into our political advocacy efforts, meeting with legislators and sharing our stories.



Heidi Fischer, Edge President | *Fischer-Clark Dairy Farm, Hatley*

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I farm with my husband, Jon, and his parents, Mike and Sue, at Fischer-Clark Dairy Farm in Hatley, Wisconsin. The farm was founded in 1972 with eight cows. Today, we milk over 1,000 cows and raise nearly 700 calves and heifers, as well as farm about 2,800 acres, growing corn, alfalfa, soybeans and grass. We employ 18 full-time and six part-time employees. In addition to practicing strip-till precision farming for the last eight years, we use some no-till and cover crops and have inter-seeded our second-year alfalfa with a grass blend to boost tonnage and milk component levels.

The milk from our farm is shipped to a privately owned cheese plant in nearby Antigo, Wisconsin.

Since 2016, our processor has continuously recognized our farm for high quality, including low somatic cell count and high cheese yield. Fischer-Clark Dairy Farm was also recognized as the 2019 Platinum Farm and the 2022 Silver Farm for the National Dairy Quality Assurance, and in 2024, we were recognized as a Gold Farm. We hope to continue advancing our farm and building more efficiencies through technology and other evolutions.

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

I believe it is important to be involved in Edge. Farming and the future of farming are very important to me. Too many people with little to no experience on a farm make decisions about my future and farming. We need to be active and have that voice, be a part of the conversation, and tell our story.

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

We are facing challenges with immigration and ensuring we have access to a workforce that wants to work in agriculture. Consumers are demanding carbon-friendly or carbon-neutral products or business practices that do not add to carbon emissions. Verifying our carbon efficiencies, as well as being able to afford some of the equipment (i.e., strip-till equipment) that is required for some of these practices, will be a challenge.

What are you looking forward to the most in your role as president?

I'm looking forward to sharing our stories and experiences with lawmakers and people in positions that shape our policies and reforms. We have a great story to tell, and we have experience; Edge is viewed as a trusted resource, and we need to continue to be active and present. I think that is the difference that sets us apart from other co-ops.



Advocating for dairy farmers across the Midwest in congress, communities and with consumers.

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