

North Dakota Dairy Promotion Commission

Presentation by Sue Kleingartner, Dairy Farmer and NDDPC Board Chair

Dairy Checkoff Activities and Priorities

2018 - 2020

Good Morning Chairman (Representative) Johnson and Chairman (Senator) Luick, Committee members and special guests. My name is Sue Kleingartner, a dairy farmer from Gackle, and the Chair of the North Dakota Dairy Promotion Commission Board of Directors.

The dairy checkoff promotion program was established with the purpose to increase demand for U.S. dairy products.

Every dairy farmer in North Dakota invests 15 cents per hundredweight of milk sold - to support the marketing of our products. A nickel of this amount goes directly to the national program, while the remaining dime goes through the North Dakota Dairy Promotion Commission to [Midwest Dairy](#) for regional and local activities.

Today I'd like to share a few examples of our dairy checkoff priorities and activities.

One of our main priorities has been to help **inspire consumer trust in dairy by offering excellent dairy experiences.**

In 2019, Midwest Dairy staff, Dairy Ambassadors and North Dakota dairy farmers reached thousands of consumers at a variety of events. Consumers of all ages enjoyed dairy treats at the Milkshakes and More Wagon at the North Dakota State Fair and had a chance to see firsthand how we as dairy farmers take great care of our animals while visiting the dairy barn. The dairy display at the Red River Valley Fair helped tell the farm-to-table story and the importance of dairy in a healthy diet.

In 2020, the presence of COVID-19 brought uncertainty to Midwest Dairy's strategic plan, but with quick pivots, we were able shift from in-person events to virtual experiences to continue to tell dairy's story. A virtual Moo and Brew event was held featuring a North Dakota dairy farmer to learn more about dairy's sustainability practices. Virtual farm tours and online curriculum featuring dairy farm resources were offered to teachers throughout North Dakota to share with their students. We continued to support our partners in school foodservice, food banks, and at retail to ensure dairy was not only available for students and families, but safely stored and cared for.

For example: Midwest Dairy distributed more than 1500 portable insulated coolers to schools throughout the region. These coolers helped ensure cold milk was served through curbside or bus-delivered meals when remote learning was in effect for all schools.

To provide more dairy products to those facing food insecurity, Midwest Dairy donated \$500,000 to food banks in the 10 states it represents. This included a donation to the Great Plains Food Bank who partnered with a local supplier to secure and distribute an additional 4700 gallons of milk to North Dakota food pantries.

Additionally, dairy farmers had the opportunity to apply for Midwest Dairy's Community Relief Grants which supplied local food pantries with a new refrigeration unit. Eight food pantries in North Dakota received coolers to be used to store dairy products and other perishable foods.

During the last two years we have continued to support school breakfast as a great opportunity to grow dairy demand. In 2019, Midwest Dairy awarded more than \$8,000 to North Dakota schools to help start or enhance breakfast outside the cafeteria through a Breakfast in the Classroom or Grab and Go service. Additionally, nearly \$15,000 was awarded to Bismarck Public Schools to purchase equipment to support alternative breakfast programs in the district. Not only do these programs increase breakfast participation but have increased dairy sales across the district.

Looking ahead to 2021, Midwest Dairy will be implementing a newly developed three-year strategic plan.

The **Vision being: "Bring Dairy to Life for a Better World!"**

During this timeframe, Midwest Dairy will **"Work with Others to Give Consumers an Excellent Dairy Experience"**, and we will continue to focus on:

- **Increasing dairy sales** by working with our partners
- **Growing trust in dairy** through dairy's environmental sustainability story and wellness messaging.
- **Advance research in dairy**
- **Create dairy checkoff advocates**
- **Develop farm and community leaders for dairy** by promoting the Dairy Ambassador program and leadership opportunities for dairy farmers and other community leaders

While we as dairy farmers have experienced both the highs and lows of markets, the dairy checkoff has played an important role in maintaining a positive demand curve for dairy.

The need for wholesome, nutrient-rich dairy foods, combined with the necessity of telling the dairy farmer's story, makes the case for the importance of an effective dairy checkoff program going forward. Midwest Dairy, on behalf of North Dakota dairy farmers and those in surrounding states, is committed to serving that role.

In closing, **I would encourage you to read the full Biennium report and visit the Midwest Dairy website to learn more about our dairy checkoff programs.**

Thank you for your time and continued support.

With me today from Midwest Dairy are Program Managers Amber Boeshans and Char Heer.

We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.