

WINTER 2024

DAIRY PROMOTION

Update



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**MAKING
EVERY
DROP
COUNT**



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As we march through the last quarter of the year, we have much to celebrate and be thankful for. Here at Midwest Dairy, we focus on being effective and efficient with your 15-cent investment for promotion and research. As I continue my first year with the organization, I have been impressed with the activations and projects funded by your checkoff dollars, and I am eager to continue expanding those efforts in the New Year.

It's hard to believe that we just left state fairs and June Dairy Month in the rearview mirror and are already looking through the windshield at Holiday and New Year's activations! The summer months are always exciting as the Midwest weather encourages consumers to leave their homes and participate in various events. Midwest Dairy continues to bring dairy to unexpected places to connect with people, drive sales, and build trust in the dairy industry.

In the pages of this Dairy Promotion Update, you will get a snapshot of the consumer impact of our summer activities and the dairy ambassadors who enthusiastically share the dairy story. These young leaders are impressive, and I am confident Midwest Dairy has provided them with numerous opportunities to showcase their passion for the industry and develop their skills. I encourage you to inspire any young people in your life to explore the opportunities offered by Midwest Dairy —they won't regret it!

Research students are back to school, and they have brought a competitive slate of projects to the Midwest Dairy Foods Research Center. Advancing dairy research is a cornerstone of dairy checkoff. Midwest Dairy funds research that addresses industry challenges and partners with those who drive demand for dairy. These students showcased research proposals focusing on processor quality and consumer dairy experience. With your funding, they continue to advance research in dairy food innovation.

As we celebrate this Holiday season, we thank you, our farmer funders, for your continued support as we advance research, build trust, and show consumers new ways to love dairy every day. We wish you a happy and healthy winter season!

Respectfully yours,
Corey Scott





MIDWEST DAIRY AMBASSADORS CELEBRATE A SUCCESSFUL YEAR OF DAIRY PROMOTION

Midwest Dairy's Dairy Ambassador program offers an educational leadership opportunity for students passionate about the dairy industry. This year, Dairy Ambassadors represented their respective states at various events, connecting with consumers and answering their questions.

To be eligible for this program, participants must be enrolled full-time in a post-secondary school for the duration of the appointment and be passionate about dairy. Once accepted as ambassadors, participants can share dairy's story with consumers and network with their peers and industry professionals. After completing their year of service, each student is eligible to apply for a scholarship.

Midwest Dairy proudly offers Dairy Ambassador programs in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota. Keep reading to learn about the experiences these outstanding individuals had!

ILLINOIS



To kick off their year, all four ambassadors came together in early May to **tour Rolling Lawns Farm's Milk House**, an off-farm micro-creamery and event center. They enjoyed lunch with owner Michael Turley, who shared leadership advice and led a creamery tour.

In late June, the group engaged with consumers at the **Winnebago-Boone Breakfast on the Farm** at the Boone County Fairgrounds. They played Dairy Trivia Plinko with breakfast attendees and had a great time interacting with and answering questions from community members. In late July, Ambassador Julia Czepiel traveled to Chicago, where she helped Illinois Farm Families build trust between consumers and Illinois farmers at the

Square Roots Festival. She engaged with Chicagoans through "Farm Four," a take on Connect Four, and a coloring mural. She enjoyed handing out Illinois Farm Families swag bags and engaging with Chicago consumers.

To round out their summer, Dairy Ambassadors connected with consumers at the **Illinois State Fair**. They spent most of their time in the Dairy Building, proudly representing the next generation of dairy leaders. Throughout the fall, they gave 17 different classroom presentations. They also participated in **Quad Day at the University of Illinois**. To end the year, one lucky ambassador had the chance to **host trivia at the Marcoot Jersey Creamery**.



Thank you to Shayden Hogg, Julia Czepiel, Hayley Pitts, and Alexa Reavley for their dedication to the Illinois Dairy Ambassador program.





IOWA



Iowa had two Dairy Ambassadors traveling across the state to reach consumers and promote the dairy industry. They stayed busy this summer with many activities, primarily visiting different county fairs. The pair promoted dairy at the **Jones County Fair, Buena Vista County Fair, Sioux County Fair, and Mills County Fair**. They volunteered at the **Iowa State Fair**, sharing dairy's story at the Iowa Food and Family Project booth, the Dairy Goodness Barn,

and the Iowa Department of Agriculture Land Stewardship booth.

In addition to county and state fairs, they organized the **Iowa Dairy Youth Communications Workshop** and participated in various skill-building activities, including writing articles.

Dairy ambassador Maggie Cronk's article was selected for publication in the **Dairy Herd Magazine**. Madilynn Marburger and the Iowa Dairy Princess also helped boost dairy sales during an in-store promotion at the **Johnston and Ankeny Hy-Vee**.

Thank you to Maggie Cronk and Madilynn Marburger for their dedication to the Iowa Dairy Ambassador program.



MINNESOTA



The Minnesota Dairy Ambassadors used this summer to sharpen their social media skills and practice handling challenging questions through various trainings. The group also networked with other agriculture professionals at events like the **Women's Environmental Network** and the **Annual Networking Night**.

They put these skills to the test at several consumer-facing events. Ambassadors enjoyed helping at the Undeniably Dairy booth during the

University of Minnesota Goldy Run, where they shared milk samples and handed out cooling towels to 5K and 10K runners. They used this opportunity to share messages about cow care. At a **St. Paul Saints game**, they shared stories about cow care and comfort through games and a photo backdrop. The cowbells attracted fans to the booth, creating opportunities for ambassadors to engage in meaningful conversations. The group also participated in the **Minnesota**



State Fair, where they assisted Midwest Dairy staff at the Undeniably Dairy booth by managing the spinning wheel, asking trivia questions, answering consumer questions about the industry, and passing out cold milk samples to fairgoers.

Thank you to Alexis Hoefs, Allison Foss, Brady Gille, Gracie Ash, Megan Ratka, and Selena Corona for their dedication to the Minnesota Dairy Ambassador program.



NEBRASKA

Each year, the Nebraska Dairy Ambassadors participate in a day of dairy tours. New this year, the **Summer Experience** was created. This experience allowed the ambassadors to build knowledge and understanding beyond the farm and dairy management practices. The daylong event, held in early July, included a variety of dairy experiences, such as making ice cream with Melisa Konecky of Beauty View Farm, learning from Chef Nadar of Billy's Restaurant, and playing the "Add to Cart" game created by Midwest Dairy. Amy Schmidt, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Extension Professor, and Livestock Manure Management Engineer spoke to the group about different sustainability practices dairy farmers are implementing. Schmidt

covered water recycling and soil health information and provided key messages that ambassadors could use when engaging with consumers at different events. At the **Nebraska Innovation Campus**, Julie Reiling, senior consultant at UNL Food Science and Technology, gave the group a tour of the Food Processing Center.

Nebraska Dairy Ambassadors shared dairy's story at other events throughout the year, including the **Nebraska State Fair, Husker Athletics events, UNL's**



College of Agriculture Sciences and Natural Resources Appreciation Event, Nebraska Dairy Promotion and Industry US Delegation Summit, and more.

For the third year, Nebraska's eligibility includes high school juniors, seniors, and college students.

Thank you to Jenna Albers, Clara Bates, Allison Engelman, Tessa Haahr, Kaitlyn Hanson, Joslyn Hochstein, Brianna Klabenes, Jenna Muntz, Ava Noecker, and Emily Rempel for their dedication to the Nebraska Dairy Ambassador program.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Participating in the annual **Dairy Dash** was one of the main activities for the South Dakota Dairy Ambassadors. The Dairy Dash is a partnership between Midwest Dairy and the South Dakota State University Miller Wellness Center to build trust in dairy among college-aged students and families. This event included a 5K race and a kid's "Moo Mile" held the same day as the **SDSU Dairy Drive football game**. Dairy Ambassadors encouraged runners to post milk mustache photos and sample various dairy products donated by partners. Kids were also invited to participate in an ice cream painting craft.

Ambassadors attended **county fairs**, engaging with visitors at their booths. They interacted with families, children,

and agriculture peers to discuss dairy nutrition products. Some of these fairs included the **Sioux Empire and Turner County Fairs**.

Finally, ambassadors attended the **Got Milk Gala**. This gala featured engaging activities, including an art contest showcasing dairy-themed artwork and a comedy performance by Farm Babe, known for her wit and humor. This celebration showcased the dairy community, fostered education, and provided a platform for conversation.

Thank you to Ifra Tun Nur, Muhammed Shijas, Ting Mao, Makenna Skiff, and Shafeeqa Irfan for their dedication to the South Dakota Dairy Ambassador program.





Midwest Dairy Foods Research Center

The Midwest Dairy Foods Research Center (MDFRC) held its annual meeting on July 31 and August 1 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This meeting invites the MDFRC's Operational Advisory Committee (OAC) members, faculty, and students to evaluate and score research proposals for potential funding. During this event, the OAC connects with students from South Dakota State University, Iowa State University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, seeking funding for research proposals that educate about dairy and build trust among farmers and consumers.

The two-day meeting began with a social gathering and a poster display of all proposed projects. These posters are a good visual, outlining the projects, and helping the OAC begin to understand the project framework. The OAC can also ask questions during this time. Student researchers gave a 20-minute explanatory PowerPoint presentation on their proposed project on day two. The

OAC then provided feedback on critical needs, objectives, research plan, budget, and project duration. They also recommend additional ideas and funding needs for students to consider. The review process is designed to be interactive and provide an opportunity for feedback and modification to enhance the project.

After careful consideration, four projects were selected for 2025 funding. The chosen projects are as follows.

1 Control of fungal growth to extend shelf life of cheddar and mozzarella cheese: impact of packaging film coated with natural antifungal compounds (Iowa State University)

Air that enters vacuum-packed cheese through pinholes or loose seals allows mold to grow, resulting in cheese spoilage. To prevent mold growth and extend the shelf life of intact cheese, a coating could be created to protect the inner surface of the packaging film with a layer containing a novel combination of food-grade antifungal compounds.

2 Development of biosensors for calcium, sodium, and potassium measurement (South Dakota State University)

Minerals, particularly calcium, significantly influence product functionality and vary based on the matrix and processing conditions. Currently, no rapid method exists to measure calcium levels, directly impacting the quality of milk beverages, cheese, and other dairy products. Developing biosensors for mineral detection is essential for improving quality and functionality control during production.

3 Develop and validate rapid and alternative methods for scorched particles in dairy powders (University of Minnesota)

Spray drying for manufacturing milk powders is very popular in the dairy industry. One of the critical properties is the number of scorched particles in the finished powders. According to the American Dairy Products Institute, scorched particles are aggregates of visibly distinct, colored Maillard reaction products caused by heat in the drying process. The lack of available filter pads for testing burnt particles in dairy powders makes it challenging to ensure product quality. Finding other types of filters and rapid testing methods is essential to identify and manage scorched particles in powders, ensuring that US-produced dairy products, especially in the Midwest region, remain safe and meet the highest quality standards.

4 Physical and chemical inhibition of color formation in permeate powders (University of Minnesota)

Lactose-containing permeate powders tend to turn brown during shipping to



Annual Meeting

meet export market demands. The browning of permeate powders will be systematically investigated, focusing on physical stability and chemical reactivity as influenced by composition, temperature, and water activity. Samples from industry partners will be analyzed in tandem with model systems. Processing and formulation

methods to prevent or reduce the browning will be evaluated.

Midwest Dairy would like to extend a special thank you to our Executive Director, Dr. Jayendra Amamcharla, and Associate Directors Prafulla Salunke and Kumar Mallikarjunan for all their hard work and support in making the MDFRC Annual Meeting a success.

What is MDFRC?

Midwest Dairy Foods Research Center is a collaborative effort between dairy farmers and different university partners with a mission of delivering research and education that benefit consumers and fuel a strong market for Midwest Dairy.



INCREASING DAIRY SALES

Appealing to families through new tactics

The “We Are Family” campaign was a partnership among checkoff, Walmart.com, and Dollar General aimed at connecting with shoppers who already purchase dairy and those who do not. It used targeted, personalized messaging in different forms to promote dairy products to consumers. This dairy messaging appeared creatively when grocery planning and shopping were top of mind, ultimately driving sales.

The campaign appealed to a wide range of shoppers for different reasons. The We Are Family campaign specifically targeted individuals looking for family meal ideas, kitchen hacks for busy parents, and ways to incorporate protein into their cooking. It also provided detailed information about growth, performance, and the importance of dairy nutrition during the first 1,000 days of a baby’s life. Additionally, the campaign addresses diverse nutritional needs by highlighting options for gut health and lactose intolerance available

in the dairy section. Overall, We Are Family was a well-rounded campaign that resonated with the entire family.

This campaign employed an omnichannel activation strategy to engage shoppers across digital platforms, directing traffic to online shopping sites. Adopting a customer-centric approach, the campaign seamlessly integrated all of the seller’s channels, including physical store locations, apps, websites, and social media. Shoppers across these channels encountered a unified brand experience, with consistent messaging repeated in different spaces reminding them of the enjoyment and benefits of dairy. This campaign reached shoppers across digital touchpoints, driving traffic to Walmart.com and in-store at Dollar General by providing information and access to affordable, nutritious dairy products.



This was a group effort, and many state and regional checkoffs were committed to it. Dairy Management West, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, DairyMAX, Midwest Dairy, Oregon Dairy Council, American Dairy Association Mideast, Dairy Farmers of Washington, Dairy West, American Dairy Association North East, and Florida Dairy Farmers all contributed funds to this campaign.

The We Are Family campaign targeted two key fall events: back-to-school and the sports season kickoff. It ran from July 29 to Sept. 30, 2024. Sales results from this campaign are being recorded, and we will report back to you on its success in the new year.



Checkoff partners celebrate

June is Dairy Month, a national celebration widely supported by many Midwest Dairy partners. It is a great time to promote dairy products in the grocery store through special deals and campaigns, highlighting how farmers responsibly and sustainably produce them. In 2024, Midwest Dairy’s grocery partners celebrated and showcased the Midwest dairy farmer.

■ Hy-Vee



Midwest Dairy partnered with Hy-Vee Inc. to create a chain-wide celebration of June Dairy Month. Hy-Vee is a retailer based in West Des Moines, Iowa, and operates 304 grocery stores across eight Midwestern states, including Illinois, Nebraska, Minnesota, Missouri, Kansas, and South Dakota. The “Greetings from Dairy” campaign focused on sustainable dairy production and promoting unique dairy recipes. Featured recipes included strawberry cottage cheese ice cream, bacon bruschetta dip, and southwest avocado sliders.

The campaign included in-store displays at more than 179 stores, aisle blades with QR codes linking to recipes and a dairy farm sustainability video, targeted e-commerce banners with a “shop now”

feature, two weekly print ads, a social media post with Midwest Dairy’s sustainability video, in-store events with the Iowa Dairy Princess and Dairy Ambassadors, and a Hy-Vee/Daisy Brand NASCAR partnership event at the Iowa Speedway located in Newton.



The e-commerce banners reached over one million viewers, and shopper conversions netted 24,068 basket purchases from click-throughs. Facebook posts also reached over half a million viewers. Overall, this June Dairy Month campaign generated 290,000 incremental pounds of milk.

■ Fareway

Fareway teamed up with Midwest Dairy to share the love of dairy and celebrate June Dairy Month. Headquartered in Boone, Iowa, Fareway operates 131 stores across seven Midwestern states; Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota. To boost sales, Fareway launched a multi-channel campaign focusing on high-growth categories such as cheese, yogurt, and cottage cheese.



Fareway collaborated with 35 local Hummingbird influencers to capture the attention of Gen Z shoppers,

showcasing how dairy seamlessly fits into their daily meals. Hummingbirds is a social media platform that recruits local consumers to share their experiences with brands, recipes, or shopping. These influencers reach thousands of local consumers to impact their shopping behaviors and drive results. The website users are 90 percent women, 75 percent aged between 24-45, and 50 percent are parents. This Dairy Month campaign amassed over 10,000 views. As part of the campaign, Fareway selected a vendor sponsor, Sargento, to support the campaign with exclusive sales promotions

highlighting the love of dairy. Fareway dietitians hosted a virtual cooking class in early June, teaching 85 participants how to make Cheesy California and Italian Grinder Wraps. Attendees also watched a “Community That Cares” video, spotlighting local family farmers who sustainably produce dairy. These promoted healthy eating and reinforced community support. The campaign featured targeted email, homepage, and in-store monitor ads, complemented by social media content, recipes, and giveaways on Facebook and Instagram.



This multi-channel campaign reached an impressive 400,000 consumers and increased milk sales by over 410,000 pounds, reinforcing dairy’s vital role as a dietary staple.

JUNE DAIRY MONTH

Jewel-Osco

Midwest Dairy partnered with Chicago-based retailer Jewel-Osco on an omnichannel strategy. An omnichannel strategy integrates all of a brand's channels to create a consistent customer experience across all touchpoints. Jewel incentivized stores to create dairy displays to promote their



“buy \$25 in dairy products and receive \$5 off” promotion, which ran throughout June at Jewel’s 188 stores across Illinois and Iowa.

In addition to in-store displays, Jewel promoted June Dairy Month through its weekly circular ad, posts on Instagram and Facebook, and billboards. The billboard ad appeared on 30 boards across Chicagoland, garnering over 2.5 million impressions in four weeks.



New in 2024, Midwest Dairy also partnered with Jewel-Osco’s parent company, Albertsons, and its retail media division to promote Dairy Month through online display ads. These display ads appeared on Jewel’s e-commerce website and on websites across the internet to drive traffic to Jewelosco.com. Campaign highlights



included over three million impressions and a return on ad spend of \$52.43. Over two million incremental pounds of milk were sold from this omnichannel campaign.

Coborn’s

Coborn’s, a retailer in St. Cloud, Minnesota, partnered with Midwest Dairy to celebrate June Dairy Month. Together, they produced the “Welcome Home to Dairy” campaign featuring interviews with local Minnesota dairy farms. Three generations of the Kerfeld Hill-View Farm family were featured in an interview. Family matriarch Rosie Kerfeld was joined by her daughter-in-law, Carrie Kerfeld, and grandson, Nate Kerfeld. They discussed new sustainable practices on their dairy farm, such as robotic milking and cover crops, to preserve their farm for future generations.



Coborn’s extended the month-long celebration through weekly online email and print ads, Facebook and Instagram social media posts, in-store scannable signage linking to dairy recipes, gas pump, and TV announcements, and a June Dairy Month segment on Twin Cities Live featuring Princess Kay.



This month-long campaign reached over 471,000 consumers through social and online engagement. However, the campaign



did not achieve the targeted incremental pounds of milk sales projected due to economic headwinds.

Dierbergs Markets

Dierbergs Markets and Midwest Dairy worked together during Dairy Month to promote sales through its rewards app. Dierbergs Markets is based out of St. Louis, Missouri, and has 26 locations in Missouri and Illinois.

Midwest Dairy supported a promotional campaign at Dierbergs, offering 5x points on select dairy products during the first week of June. The campaign also featured three consecutive weeks of bonus points for purchasing cheese, yogurt, and milk. The promotional campaign was shared weekly on Facebook and Instagram, through targeted emails, in the Dierbergs app, and in the digital weekly ad. Dierbergs included dairy messaging each week, along with digital offers.

As a result of this campaign, over 65,000 incremental pounds of milk were sold.





Dairy thrives during the state fair season

Midwest Dairy was excited to engage with consumers at state fairs throughout the 10-state region. These popular state celebrations provide numerous opportunities for people to explore and learn about all things dairy. Many state fairs even saw record-breaking attendance this year. Midwest Dairy proudly showcased how dairy products are responsibly and sustainably produced to a wide audience through interactive booths, dairy displays, hands-on activities, butter sculptures, and more. A key highlight of the fair is participation by those who show their dedication and passion behind one of the Midwest's most beloved industries.



ILLINOIS

The Illinois Dairy Ambassadors went to work during the Illinois State Fair as hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans descended upon Springfield. Impeccable weather brought big crowds and record-breaking sales to the Dairy Building in 2024.

Fairgoers enjoyed the Cozy Cow Lounge that debuted at this year's fair. Dairy farmers and staff engaged with fairgoers through games and activities such as cornhole, promoting "Cows Come First" messaging throughout the lounge. The Undeniably Dairy photo booth was another huge hit, with over

8,900 photos being sent via text message. The photo booth also incorporated the Cows Come First theme. Another popular attraction was the Butter Cow. Sarah Pratt of West Des Moines, Iowa, carved the 2024 Illinois State Fair Butter Cow, which followed this year's fair theme, "It's Show Time!" and featured the iconic cow alongside her friend, a magician pulling seven scoops of ice cream out of a hat.

This year's Flavor of the Fair was Raspberry Crunch, a cold treat consisting of layers of vanilla ice cream, tart raspberries, and granola. This delicious treat proved popular, with over 2,200 Raspberry Crunch shakes sold.

The Illinois State Fair also was an excellent opportunity to build relationships with Illinois Dairy Farmers. Midwest Dairy passed out ice cream coupons at the exhibitor meeting, sponsored a pizza party for junior exhibitors, purchased the Land of Lincoln cow print at the Governor's Sale of Champions, and sponsored lunch for the State 4-H dairy judging contest.



IOWA

Each summer, the Iowa State Fair becomes a vibrant celebration of the state's agricultural heritage, drawing record visitors to experience the best of Iowa's farming traditions. This year, the Iowa State Fair set a new all-time attendance record with 1,182,682 people attending the 11-day event.

A notable highlight of dairy farmer participation at the fair was the Farm to Fair Meal. This event provides 300 consumers a unique opportunity to connect directly with food producers. Held in the fair's Pavilion, the meal highlights the journey of Iowa products from the farm to the fairgrounds. Guests enjoyed a variety of dishes made with locally sourced dairy ingredients. This event also featured educational components as five dairy farm families shared their stories and insights on dairy farming. The yummy dairy food did not stop there! No visit to the Iowa State Fair would be complete without

indulging in ice cream at the Dairy Barn. The Raspberry Cheesecake Frozen Yogurt Flavor of the Fair stood out among the fair's ice cream offerings.

To connect with a new generation of fairgoers, Midwest Dairy partnered with Iowa Corn, Iowa Beef Council, Iowa Turkey Federation, Iowa Soybean Association, and Iowa Pork to host Ag Trivia. More than 200 consumers participated in the event, answering questions about food, farming, and sustainability. Another crowd favorite is the Butter Cow, carved by Sarah Pratt of West Des Moines. The Butter Cow celebrated iconic late-night celebrities Johnny Carson, Steve Higgins, and Jimmy Fallon, along with a sky glider seat to commemorate the 50th year of the Main Sky Glider.

Lastly, the Iowa State Fair celebrates the dairy industry's future through



the Dairy Princess and Ambassador programs. During the fair, these leaders participated in kitchen demonstrations, volunteered with the Iowa Food and Family Project, and led Kid's Club activities.





KANSAS

During the 2024 Kansas State Fair, Midwest Dairy focused on sharing delicious dairy recipes with consumers. With 328,714 fairgoers attending the 10-day event, this was the perfect opportunity to connect with consumers and help them incorporate dairy into their kitchens.

Amanda Miller, a fourth-generation dairy farmer from Hutchison, Kansas, partnered with Midwest Dairy to share dairy's sustainability story and nutritional benefits while

demonstrating easy, delicious, dairy-centered recipes. Miller has conducted cooking demonstrations in her local community for almost 10 years. She uses Kansas-sourced products as much as possible and encourages consumers to do the same, including dairy products from their local grocery stores. Miller shared some of her favorite dairy recipes with fairgoers, including Chocolate Peanut Butter Cottage Cheese Ice Cream and Jammy Cheesy Yogurt Dip.



MINNESOTA

This great Minnesota get-together drew nearly two million visitors during the last weeks of summer. Five of the 12 days of the fair broke all-time attendance records. Midwest Dairy's presence emphasized the role of dairy farmers in sustainable nutrition and the goodness of dairy products.

The 71st Princess Kay of the Milky Way, Rachel Visser of Hutchinson, Minnesota, was crowned and officially began her reign. Visser participated in 39 media appearances, including trivia games and taste-testing with Twin Cities radio personalities. Along with the Princess Kay finalists, she participated in daily events, including Agri-lympics, dairy cattle shows, and the Moo Booth.

Special guests at the famous butter carving booth included Governor and Vice-Presidential candidate Tim Walz, Senator Amy Klobuchar, and representatives from the Canadian Consulate.

The education booth engaged consumers with trivia and giveaways, each providing a different method of spreading sustainable nutrition messaging. Princess Kay finalists held one-on-one conversations about cow care, the dairy industry's sustainability achievements and goals, and the concept of "poop to power." Farmers also got a chance to interact with consumers at one of the State Fair's most popular attractions, the CHS

Miracle of Birth Center. While H5N1 concerns meant no calves in the barn, dairy farmers brought their experience and knowledge into conversations with fairgoers. All farmers who volunteered had previously graduated from Midwest Dairy's Dairy Experience and Agricultural Leadership program.

Lastly, the fair encountered unexpected challenges, including power outages and severe storms. Despite these challenges, sales at the Dairy Goodness Bar hit record-breaking revenue, reflecting a 3 percent increase from 2023, while the All You Can Drink Milk Stand saw a 17 percent increase in sales.





MISSOURI

The 2024 Missouri State Fair in Sedalia allowed Midwest Dairy to introduce something new this year -- a Flavor of the Fair ice cream treat. Missouri Governor Mike Parson personally selected the inaugural Flavor of the Fair, Kingdom Crunchdown. Served for this fair season only, the winning combination featured layers of vanilla soft serve ice cream, strawberries, and crunchy milk chocolate candy, topped with chocolate syrup and gold sprinkles. Fairgoers raved about this yummy flavor, and one fairgoer noted, "It's worth the price of admission!"

This year's butter cow sculpture, a well-known Missouri State Fair attraction with a 19-year history, used nearly 600 pounds of unsalted butter. Returning sculptor Ander Weis carved the "Lost in a Dairy Tale" sculpture,

which took 100 hours to complete. Midwest Dairy's partnership with the Missouri Wine and Grape Board brought dairy to unexpected places like a Wine 101 pairing class. This class attracted 400 participants who sampled Applewood Smoked Cheddar and a Taco Cheddar cheese curd from Hemme Brothers Creamery. Participants left with a cheeseboard inspiration handout to bring the dairy experience home.

Finally, the Kansas City Mom Collective partnered with Midwest Dairy to promote the State Fair as a family-friendly day trip. Kansas City Mom Collective is committed to creating an encouraging and supportive online and offline community for the



moms of Kansas City. One mom and online creator took the Collective's followers on a fun-filled day at the fair, encouraging them to visit and learn about dairy. The social media outreach, including an Instagram reel, Facebook post, and article, reached more than 26,000 people. Featured fair stops included the butter cow and food from the Gerken Dairy Center for her 22,000 followers, directing them to the article "Mom's Guide to the Missouri State Fair."





NEBRASKA

With the support of partners, Midwest Dairy reached consumers through various activations that helped build trust during the 2024 Nebraska State Fair.

Over Labor Day weekend, Chef Nadar of Billy's Restaurant in Lincoln provided four cooking demonstrations. Partnering with the Nebraska Pork Producers Association, Midwest Dairy hosted Deliciousness with Dairy & Pork and served nearly 500 sample food boats to a packed crowd.

Nebraska's Largest Classroom, a three-day event, welcomed 3,400 elementary students during the fair. Midwest Dairy staff, dairy farmers, advocate volunteers, and Nebraska Dairy Ambassadors shared dairy's sustainable nutrition story at the dairy exhibit in the Raising Nebraska building. During the dairy presentation, students enjoyed cold milk from Nebraska State Fair partner Hiland Dairy.

Fair attendees visited the Undeniably Dairy Booth, which featured various messages about the sustainable nutrition story of dairy through handouts, QR codes, and dairy swag. The dairy display showcased all seven dairy cow breeds managed by the "Moo Crew," which is comprised of dairy farmers and advocates. The "Moo Crew" provided highly attended milking demonstrations in the milking parlor 52 times over the 11-day fair. During the demonstrations, attendees could ask questions, and more than 150 coupons for the ice cream parlor were distributed. These ice cream coupons included scan codes directing them to the Undeniably Dairy site for more information about the health benefits of dairy. In collaboration with the milking demonstration, Prairie Promise Lean Beef provided more than 1,700 string cheese sticks as a nutritious snack for fair attendees.



SOUTH DAKOTA

Midwest Dairy continues to partner with the South Dakota State Fair to reach fairgoers of all ages. Last year, this partnership led to updated signage on the Dakota Marketplace, home to the Dairy Bar, where fairgoers enjoy ice cream and all-you-can-drink milk. Additional updates kept the dairy space modern for this year's fair. In 2024, utilizing Midwest Dairy's Undeniably Dairy grant funds, a local artist painted a mural of various breeds of dairy cows on the dairy barn at the South Dakota State Fair for all to enjoy.

Continuing its partnership with Discover Dairy, Midwest Dairy provided dairy education resources and signage to over 50 teachers through the State's Largest Classroom program. Midwest



Dairy also donated over 700 cartons of milk to be enjoyed in students' lunches.

Midwest Dairy sponsored several events throughout the fair, including an ice cream social at the Value-Added Ag Day, ice cream bars at the 4-H Leaders Appreciation Evening, and malt coupons at the Farm Bureau Centennial Farms Presentation. Midwest Dairy and Valley

Queen Cheese provided milk and cheese sticks to dairy exhibitors and those watching the dairy shows. Dairy was also featured in the scavenger hunt hosted by the Farm Bureau, where over 750 ice cream coupons were given as prizes.





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INCREASING DAIRY SALES

Marco's Pizza partnership results are in!



This summer, Midwest Dairy worked with a new partner, Marco's Pizza, to drive dairy sales through their limited-time offer of "Fiery Flavors" menu items. Marco's Pizza is one of the fastest-growing pizza brands in America, with 1,222 stores across 35 states.

Marco's Pizza's consumer research aligned with checkoff, confirming that consumers want new flavors and menu items. To meet this demand, Marco's developed seven items for its new Fiery Flavors menu, all using a spicy cheese blend infused with Carolina Reaper, Habanero, and Jalapeño peppers.

Together, checkoff support from Midwest Dairy, American Dairy Association Mideast, DairyMax, and United Dairy Industry of Michigan enabled Marco's to add significant

social media support and in-store point-of-sale materials promoting the Fiery Flavors menu. Other marketing tactics included email communications, digital advertising, and box toppers with coupons for return visits. A video telling dairy's story using the tagline "Real Dairy. Real Fresh." was included in the promotional emails and other digital media.

Campaign results show that this menu upgrade was successful. Over 93 million emails were sent during the campaign, and paid media delivered over 30 million impressions. Marco's website received over 650,000 clicks for the Fiery Flavors items alone!



Some stores reported an increase overall and saw a 2 percent increase in new customers. The customer return rate exceeded 14.9 percent, outdoing their typical single-digit benchmark.

Overall, the partnership drove over 2,000,000 incremental pounds of milk.

