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CEO, Midwest Dairy

## Sharing dairy's sustainability story beyond Earth Day

It has been said that every day is Earth Day for farmers. At Midwest Dairy, we recognize the hard work each of you do day in and day out to be good stewards of your animals, land and resources. We know how committed you are to providing delicious, sustainably-produced dairy foods, and it is much appreciated.

In this issue of *Promotion in Action*, you'll read about how we're helping to tell your sustainability stories and how we're getting to better know and understand dairy consumers so we can connect with them in the most effective ways possible to build trust and grow dairy sales.

April 22 may be the day our calendars mark as Earth Day, but well beyond this single day, we'll continue the conversation with and through our partners about the sustainable practices you implement on your farms and how everything you do is for the purpose of producing the "good for you" dairy so many of us enjoy.

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## Midwest Dairy elects leadership

Allen Merrill from Parker, South Dakota, was re-elected chairman of Midwest Dairy during the organization's annual meeting held last week in Des Moines, Iowa.

Elections for the Corporate board officer team also were held. Charles Krause, Buffalo, Minnesota, was re-elected first vice chairman; Dan Hotvedt, Decorah, Iowa, was re-elected second vice chairman; Lowell Mueller, Hooper, Nebraska, was re-elected secretary and Barb Liebenstein, Dundas, Minnesota, was re-elected treasurer.

New members elected by their divisions to the Midwest Dairy Corporate board include:

- Brent Mueller, Garden Prairie, Illinois
- Pam Bolin, Clarksville, Iowa
- Megan Herberg, St. Peter, Minnesota
- Kate McAndrews, Sauk Centre, Minnesota

Division board officers and new members are as follows:

### **Illinois Division**

- Chairman – Bill Deutsch, Sycamore
- Vice chairman – David Jarden, Staunton
- Secretary – Amy Hildebrandt, South Beloit
- Treasurer – Glen Meier, Ridott
- Steve Obert, Orangeville; Bryan Henrichs, Breese; and Craig Meng, Freeburg; were seated as new members of the Illinois Division board.

### **Iowa Division**

- Chairman – Dan Hotvedt, Decorah
- Vice chairman – Lee Maassen, Maurice
- Secretary – Jonna Schutte, Monona
- Treasurer – Larry Shover, Delhi
- Jolene Duitscher, Rolfe, was seated as a new member of the Iowa Division board.

### **Minnesota Division**

- Chairwoman – Barb Liebenstein, Dundas
- Vice chairwoman – Kristine Spadgenske, Menahga
- Secretary – Rita Young, Plainview
- Treasurer – Suzanne Vold, Glenwood
- Joe Engelmeyer, Melrose and Shirley Hulinsky, Burtrum, were seated as new members of the Minnesota Division board.

The Minnesota Dairy Promotion Council, a quasi-governmental group with the same board members, elected the following:

- Chairman – Charles Krause, Buffalo
- Vice chairwoman – Rita Young, Plainview
- Secretary – Karen Kasper, Owatonna
- Treasurer – Margaret Johnson, Fountain
- Executive member-at-large – Sarah Kuechle, Eden Valley

## Mo-Kan Division

- Chairman – Byron Lehman, Newton, Kansas
- Vice chairman – Alex Peterson, Trenton, Missouri
- Secretary – Donna Telle, Uniontown, Missouri
- Treasurer – Curtis Steenbock, Longford, Kansas

## Nebraska Division

- Chairwoman – Mary Temme, Wayne
- Vice chairwoman – Joyce Racicky, Mason City
- Secretary/Treasurer – Jodi Cast, Beaver Crossing

## North Dakota Division

- Chairman – Rita Mosset, Linton
- Vice chairman – Terry Entzminger, Jamestown
- Secretary – Sue Kleingartner, Gackle
- Treasurer – Lilah Krebs, Gladstone

## Ozarks Division

- Chairman – Nathan Roth, Mountain Grove, Missouri
- Vice chairwoman – Marilyn Calvin, Mt. Vernon, Missouri
- Secretary – Jack Dill, Conway, Missouri
- Treasurer – Mark Fellwock, Monett, Missouri
- Craig Westfall, Halfway, Missouri, was seated as a new member of the Ozarks Division board.

## South Dakota Division

- Chairman – Jim Neugebauer, Dimock
- Vice chairwoman – Annelies Seffrood, Summit
- Secretary – Chris Fieber, Goodwin
- Treasurer – Gary Jarding, Alexandria
- Tim Den Dulk, Beresford, was seated as a new member of the South Dakota Division board.

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## New Dairy on the Air episode features deeper dive into dairy farming, sustainability

In the latest episode of Midwest Dairy's *Dairy on the Air* podcast – [A Deeper Dive into Dairy Farming and Sustainability](#) – Midwest dairy farmer and Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) Chairman of the Board, Steve Schlangen, and Midwest Dairy Vice President, Agricultural Affairs, Bob Lefebvre, discuss key elements of the dairy community's commitments and goals to be part of the environmental solution.

In this conversation, hosted by Andy Vance, Schlangen and Lefebvre share how all dairy farmers – no matter the size of their operation – can be part of the solution for the dairy value chain to accomplish U.S. Dairy's 2050 environmental stewardship goals.

Data has shown that consumers' desires to buy more sustainable products has held steady or increased during the pandemic, and they want brands and companies to implement programs that help the

environment. With a longstanding commitment to sustainability, dairy farmers are in a unique position to deliver on these consumer demands. Sustainability is also becoming a bigger part of decision-making for investors. By working toward U.S. Dairy's sustainability goals, the value chain will have data proof points to share that will put metrics behind these efforts.

Schlangen and Lefebvre talk about how this work is the right thing to do, and how there are four key areas that dairy farmers can focus on, including: feed production, cow care, energy efficiency and manure management. Schlangen mentions how not all tactics are the right choice for each farmer, however, it is important for dairy farmers to evaluate options and take note of the successes of other farmers. Then, they must determine what is the right fit for their farm, and work to make those changes – many of which also have potential to help a farm's bottom line.

This Dairy on the Air episode, and others, can be download on iTunes, Google Play, Stitcher, iHeartRadio or your favorite podcast platform. You can also listen to this, and all Dairy on the Air episodes, directly on [MidwestDairy.com](https://www.midwestdairy.com).

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## Midwest Dairy Releases 2020 Annual Report

In conjunction with our recent Annual Meeting held in Des Moines, Midwest Dairy distributed its [2020 Annual Report](#) to dairy farmer leaders from throughout the Midwest region. Highlighting the theme "Focusing on the Power of Dairy," the report showcases examples of how Midwest Dairy, our partners and dairy farmers throughout the region have focused on the power of dairy this past pandemic year, showcasing its powerful nutrition and sustainability stories in new and creative ways.

The report shares examples of checkoff impact in four key areas: Driving Dairy Demand, Growing Trust in Dairy, Developing Tomorrow's Dairy Leaders and Sharing Research & Insights. The report also includes introductory remarks from Midwest Dairy board chair Allen Merrill and CEO Molly Pelzer. The annual report lists details about 2020 spending and revenues, a variety of infographics that highlight examples of checkoff impact and a list of key Farmer Relations staff members who serve as resources for dairy farmers in each state.

Copies of the report were mailed to all Midwest dairy farmers and staff. The report is also posted on Midwest Dairy's website in the For Farmers (Dairy Farmer Communications) section.

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## Improved cow feed focus of new Net Zero Initiative partnership

Making another step forward for U.S. dairy's Net Zero Initiative, The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, Syngenta and The Nature Conservancy recently announced a new partnership to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by improving the production and efficiency of dairy cow feed.

The partnership will launch its new program in one or two states later this year with plans to scale and expand to other geographic regions across the U.S. over the next three years.

The partnership presents opportunities to incorporate hybrid feeds that can improve the digestibility of starch in cattle feed. Increased feed efficiency means significant environmental savings and benefits for climate-impacting greenhouse gas emission as well as land, water and energy use. For farmers, this

initiative means increased productivity and progress towards U.S. dairy's sustainability goal to collectively achieve net zero methane emissions.

To learn more about this partnership, click [here](#).

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## Research provides insight into minimizing listeria contamination in dairy manufacturing plants

A research team led by Andrea Bianchini, Ph.D., of the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, recently conducted a study to assess the transfer of listeria in dairy manufacturing plants.

Listeria is a ubiquitous, foodborne pathogen found in a variety of places within dairy manufacturing plants, including moist environments, areas with condensation, standing water and/or food residues. Once the pathogen has been established in the processing facility, it can easily be transferred from place to place by personnel and personal protective equipment (PPE). The bacteria can survive a wide pH range, and moisture content, in both anaerobic and aerobic conditions. Listeria can grow at low temperatures, which becomes an issue in refrigerated products like milk, and other frozen novelties.

Bianchini and her team assessed the transfer of listeria from contaminated PPE such as gloves, aprons and boots, to various food-contact and non-food-contact surfaces after consecutive touches.

Results indicated that listeria transfer was different depending upon PPE and surface combinations. Higher transfer microbial counts were observed in glove-mediated transfer to dairy products such as queso fresco, followed by cheddar cheese.

As a follow-up study, the effectiveness of sanitizers against listeria contamination were evaluated. Peroxyacetic acid proved to be the best sanitizer for aprons, however, the presence of organic matter, such as skim milk, reduced the antimicrobial effect of sanitizers.

Overall, an extensive cleaning protocol following contamination showed encouraging results, emphasizing the need for scrubbing and cleaning protocols for effective listeria control and reduction.

The results of the study are important to improve sanitation protocols but will also better inform the dairy industry to improve training materials and provides quantitative data for future risk assessment research around this topic.

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## What can we do to expand student health and wellness right now?

The final national forum, [\*\*\*Issues and Action Steps: National Forum on Expanding Healthier School Communities\*\*\*](#) was held on Wednesday, March 24. The event brought together education and community stakeholders across the country to develop solutions, participate in dialogue and discussion, and develop personal action plans for their communities to:

Establish and nurture the whole-child mindset and develop solutions to address inequalities through collaboration and cross-functional relationships.

- Envision post-pandemic solutions to support continued healthier school community growth.
- Emphasize the value of partnerships to create and fund healthier school communities.

If you weren't able to join us live, you can access the event video and visual notes [here](#). In addition, you're invited to download and use [these valuable resources](#). Please feel free to share the links to the video and resources with school and community leaders.

Midwest Dairy was proud to underwrite this event in partnership with GENYOUth.

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## "Show Me, Don't Tell Me: Dairy Innovations for a Sustainable Future" webinar

There is work to do when it comes to protecting our environment, and dairy plays a role. Today, the carbon footprint of a glass of milk is two-thirds less than it was 70 years ago, yet it still has the same nutritional benefits and great taste. We've made progress, but we're not stopping there. We must strike a balance between human health and environmental health. The dairy community is committed to conserving natural resources and making further progress.

On April 29, join National Dairy Council to learn directly from dairy farmers and other dairy innovators about technologies and on-farm practices to reduce food waste and greenhouse gas emissions and improve water use and quality. Registered dietitian nutritionists can receive complementary continuing education credit for attending. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/hwf4cehy>.

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## Emergency School Meal Delivery Fund a year later

March 30 marked a full year since GENYOUth launched the [Emergency School Meal Delivery Fund](#). Thanks to generous contributions from corporate partners, foundations, and individual donations, in the last year alone, GENYOUth raised over \$20 million, which includes funds for the COVID-19 Emergency School Meal Delivery Fund. As a result, 10,000 schools nationwide received grants to deliver meals to students at risk of food insecurity. Unfortunately, there are over 10,000 schools who have applied for funding. So, our work is not done and we continue to raise funds to close the gap.

GENYOUth entered 2021 with a sense of urgency and used a two-pronged approach to bring incremental resources to the **Emergency School Meal Delivery Fund**. Since January, GENYOUth presented their first eSports initiative, the [Chunky® Million Meals Challenge](#), which matched some of the nation's best Madden Tournament players with a roster of well-known NFL players in a contest where proceeds benefitted the fund. In the days following that event, GENYOUth executed our inaugural role as the host and beneficiary of the [Taste of the NFL](#) at Super Bowl LV in Tampa Bay, Florida.

Together, proceeds from the **Chunky® Million Meals Challenge** and **Taste of the NFL** will support the delivery of **125 million school meals**, which include milk/dairy, to food insecure students in **all 32 NFL markets across the country and beyond**.

- Proceeds from Chunky® Million Meals Challenge will be distributed to schools in the grant queue using a rubric, which considers level of free/reduced price meal eligible students, school enrollment, and number of meals served.

- Proceeds from Taste of the NFL will also be dedicated to schools in the grant queue **with an emphasis on rural schools within the 32 NFL markets**. A greater number of schools will receive grants within the Tampa Bay area, as the Super Bowl LV host city.

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## Pilot influencer project delivers on sales

As noted in an earlier [news story](#), Midwest Dairy piloted a 3-month social influencer media campaign to drive sales of fluid milk between October 2020 and January 2021. With the help of a new vendor, [Inmar Intelligence](#), we engaged 30 social influencers to target key retailers in our region and used a trusted sales partner, IRI, to analyze any resulting incremental sales of milk. This is the first time we have used social influencers in a focused retail activation offering measurable sales impact. IRI requires three months to perform their analysis after a campaign ends, which is why the data is being shared now.

The IRI sales data shows that the social influencer campaign — which featured recipes tagging retailers using the hashtag #gotmilkrecipe; linked to the shoppable recipe hub [www.dairycooks.com](http://www.dairycooks.com); and had 'swipe-ups' directing consumers to retailer shopping carts — drove 10,628,816 incremental gallons of milk sold. This equates to **91,407,818 incremental pounds of milk sold**.

Control markets were used to ensure that factors like COVID-19 could be eliminated from the sales lift. Sales results were also adjusted for any significant brand or competitive in-store variable such as features, displays, pricing, distribution, and/or category volume. Paid media impressions in non-controlled markets further refined the accuracy of the data (i.e. harder to track organic posts and where that content might appear).

While IRI limited its sales analysis to fluid milk, we know that other dairy products more than doubled the number of milk products consumers put in shopping carts at checkout. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume the campaign had the halo effect of lifting more than fluid milk sales.

Given the success of this pilot, we are hoping to replicate this opportunity in the future.

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