

SUMMER 2025

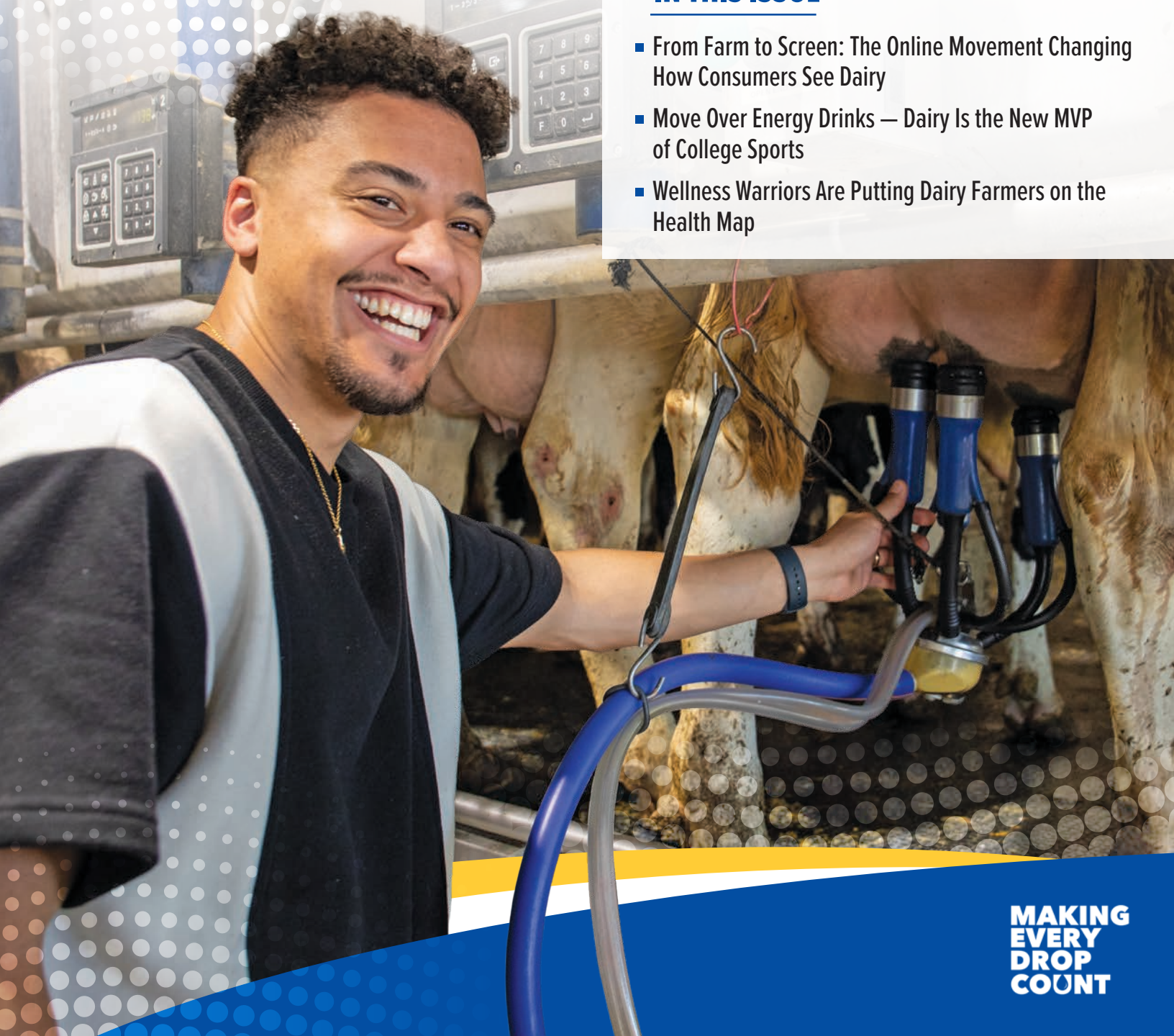
DAIRY PROMOTION

Update



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- Move Over Energy Drinks — Dairy Is the New MVP of College Sports
- Wellness Warriors Are Putting Dairy Farmers on the Health Map



**MAKING
EVERY
DROP
COUNT**



SUMMER 2025

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CEO REMARKS



Summer has been a season of momentum and meaningful connections. Like many of you, the team at Midwest Dairy jumped right from spring planning into National Dairy Month celebrations and a full schedule of warm-weather activities. It's been a busy few months, but the energy and progress have been incredibly rewarding.

You'll find many of these summer highlights featured in the upcoming Winter edition of the *Dairy Promotion Update* magazine. In the meantime, I'm excited to share a few key updates in this Summer edition.

One of the most exciting developments has been the continued progress of our Midwest Dairy Accelerator program. This initiative supports innovative entrepreneurs who are creating new products with real dairy at the core. The program is a great example of how we're driving long-term relevance and growth for dairy in today's evolving marketplace. Be sure to check out the latest update in this issue.

Another highlight from this summer was the influencer immersion experience. We had the opportunity to bring a group of social media influencers to a dairy farm for a firsthand look at daily chores, animal care, and farm family life. For many, it was a powerful and eye-opening experience. Since then, they've shared authentic, heartfelt stories with their followers, helping bridge the gap between consumers and the people behind their dairy.

As always, thank you for your continued partnership and passion for dairy. I wish you a safe and successful harvest season and hope you take a few moments to enjoy the rest of your summer!

Warm regards,
Corey Scott

BOARD CHAIR REMARKS



Hello, fellow dairy farmers! Summer is here, and as always, the weather is on our minds. In some areas, excess moisture has become a challenge, but overall, the weather has been more favorable for crops and not quite as ideal for our cows.

Midwest Dairy staff have recently completed the first round of summer division meetings across our 10-state region. I continue to be impressed by the variety and quality of work happening throughout our area. The commitment and creativity on display reflect the passion our region has for promoting dairy.

I also want to extend my sincere thanks to all the farmers who take time out of their busy day-to-day responsibilities to volunteer their time and talents supporting the dairy community. Whether it's hosting a breakfast or dinner on the farm, speaking to community groups, assisting with princess or ambassador programs, leading farm tours, or sharing your story on social media, your efforts make a real difference. Every one of us has a unique and powerful story to tell. The American farmer remains one of the most trusted voices out there, so don't hesitate to share the great things you do every day to nourish the world with sustainable, nutritious dairy.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the numerous individuals who support dairy farmers in countless ways. Veterinarians, nutritionists, milk haulers, co-op and plant workers, custom field service providers, feed mill operators, dairy checkoff staff, farm employees, family members—and many others I haven't named—each play a vital role in helping us succeed. It takes all of us to fulfill the noble mission of feeding the world.

I wish you all the best,
Charles Krause



FROM FARM TO SCREEN:

The Online Movement Changing How Consumers See Dairy

In today's digital world, where the average person spends more than six hours a day online, connecting with consumers requires more than just screen time: it demands intention, authenticity, and meaningful storytelling. That's why Midwest Dairy continues to partner with social media influencers to help build trust in dairy's role in a sustainable food system.

One standout example is *Savor the Story: Farm, Food & Flavor*. This 2025 event was a thoughtfully curated experience designed to foster authentic engagement between food and lifestyle influencers, Wellness Warriors (See the story on page 10 to learn more.), and Midwest Dairy staff. The goal was to deepen their understanding of dairy's environmental impact and inspire them to share dairy's real story with their audiences.

Seven food and lifestyle creators from across the region, all part of Midwest Dairy's IN-fluencer Network, were selected for this immersive, two-day journey. Each was chosen for their creativity, credibility, and previous success bringing dairy's message to life through compelling content. The influencers create compelling content and bring their unique storytelling to dairy campaigns throughout the year, and help to reach consumers online.

The experience began at Krause Holsteins in Buffalo, Minnesota, where influencers explored the freestall barn, commodity shed, and milking parlor, gaining firsthand insight into sustainable farming practices. They also observed a soil health demonstration, an essential component of regenerative agriculture.

The second day shifted the focus to food. Participants took part in an interactive classroom session on dairy's role in a sustainable food system, followed by a storytelling workshop to sharpen their content creation skills. To wrap up, they rolled up their sleeves in a culinary class led by a local artisan at Minneapolis' France 44, where they learned to pull fresh mozzarella and craft their own gourmet pizzas.

Throughout the two days, participants had time to connect, collaborate, and share experiences, building lasting relationships and reinforcing the community that dairy supports. The results speak for themselves. The IN-fluencer Network produced 121 original pieces of content on Instagram and TikTok, with consumers seeing the content more than 106,900 times with 2,900 engagements.





(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

These influence followers praised the experience as fun and educational, and many shared new dairy facts they were surprised to learn.

Looking ahead, Midwest Dairy's IN-fluencer Network will continue to play a vital role in sharing dairy's story—from seasonal recipes to sustainability tips—helping bridge the gap between farm and table, one post at a time.

Today's consumers are influenced by what they see online, and these trusted relationships are more important than ever. By partnering with influencers who have strong, engaged audiences, Midwest Dairy builds trust in dairy through relatable, real-life content that educates, inspires, and motivates action. These authentic connections raise awareness around dairy's value, and reinforce its place in a modern, health-conscious, and environmentally aware lifestyle.



Tiffany
FROM MISSOURI



EXPERIENCE IT FOR YOURSELF!

Check out these featured highlights:



Jaliya
FROM MINNESOTA





jay.and.chan



the.sierramckenzie



Chef Mike
FROM CHICAGO



Heather

FROM NEBRASKA



Sierra

FROM NORTH DAKOTA



**Channing
& Jayden**

FROM ARKANSAS





MIDWEST DAI

Aims To

Midwest Dairy is setting the stage for dairy innovation with the 2025 Midwest Dairy Accelerator program. In partnership with innovation consultant VentureFuel, this eight-week virtual program is designed to fast-track the growth of promising dairy-focused food and beverage startups throughout the region.

This initiative builds on Midwest Dairy's previous partnerships with The Hatchery and No More Empty Pots, evolving from single-day pitch events into a comprehensive accelerator, all while maintaining the same core goal: supporting innovative businesses that use dairy ingredients in their products. Through this expanded approach, Midwest Dairy has seen firsthand how empowering these entrepreneurs drives dairy sales by reaching current and emerging customer bases.

By partnering with VentureFuel, Midwest Dairy extended the accelerator's reach across the entire 10-state region, attracting a strong pool of food and beverage entrepreneurs.

In early Spring, Midwest Dairy invited startups to apply. The four startups selected for the inaugural cohort stood out from a highly competitive pool of applicants. Each brings a unique and creative approach to incorporating real dairy into their products.

Lorenzo's Frozen Pudding

(Chicago, IL): Creators of gourmet, locally sourced frozen puddings.

RoseBud Ice Cream

(Glen Ellyn, IL): Premium soft-serve pouches designed for mess-free indulgence anytime, anywhere.

Sugarwitch

(St. Louis, MO): Small batch ice cream sandwiches crafted with premium ingredients and bold, innovative flavors, all precision-cut and individually wrapped for easy enjoyment.

ZOGURI

(Omaha, NE): The first yogurt-based probiotic supplement featuring two keystone strains of *L. reuteri* to restore essential gut bacteria.



Sugarwitch

Represented by Founder & Director Sophie Moss and Founder Martha Moss



Zoguri by BioPocrates

Represented by President & Founder Daniel Rehal

DAIRY ACCELERATOR

Turn Fresh Ideas Into Dairy Sales

The accelerator program launched in July, offering chosen participants a robust curriculum that includes expert-led workshops, one-on-one mentorship, and in-depth explorations of key business areas such as consumer insights, ingredient sourcing, co-packing, distribution, retail strategy, marketing, and pitching. Leaders from top brands, cooperatives, universities, and more across the dairy supply chain will contribute to the learning experience.

The program will culminate in a live pitch event on September 3, 2025, at The Hatchery, a nonprofit food and beverage incubator and a former Midwest Dairy partner in Chicago. There, finalists will pitch their businesses to a panel of industry judges for the chance

to win \$20,000 for first place and \$10,000 for second, allowing them to grow their business and, in return, increase dairy sales and loyalty among their customers.

“At Midwest Dairy, we believe true innovation happens when bold entrepreneurs challenge the norm and harness the full potential of real dairy’s nutrition and its taste,” said Beth Bruck-Upton, Vice President of Research and Innovation at Midwest Dairy. “By investing in food and beverage startups, we’re not just fueling new ideas, we’re shaping the future of an industry that has supported communities for generations. This is exactly where checkoff needs to be—at the forefront of innovation, ensuring

dairy remains relevant in an ever-evolving marketplace.”

Fred Schonenberg, Founder and CEO of VentureFuel, echoed the value of partnership in innovation. He said, “Collaboration between startups and enterprise is the cornerstone of modern food innovation. Programs like this Accelerator create a direct pipeline for bold ideas to meet the scale and reach needed to transform the dairy consumer landscape.”

With a continued focus on economic, environmental, and social sustainability, Midwest Dairy’s Accelerator is reshaping how consumers experience dairy, one innovative product at a time. Follow the journey and learn more at midwestdairyaccelerator.com and check out the Winter Dairy Promotion Update to find out who wins the title!



Lorenzo's Frozen Pudding

Represented by Co-Founder & CEO Genesis Bencivenga Sr.



RoseBud Ice Cream

Represented by Cream Executive Officer Sam Rose



MOVE OVER ENERGY DRINKS — DAIRY IS THE NEW MVP

In 2024 and 2025, Midwest Dairy entered a new influential space by partnering with a collegiate athletics conference for the first time. Collegiate athletics has become a major stage, even rivaling the popularity of professional sports. These teams, schools, and athletes



bring people together, creating a sense of community. Midwest Dairy stepped onto this stage by partnering with the Big 12 Conference, one of the nation's premier conferences, for three major championship events: soccer, wrestling, and basketball.

By harnessing the power of college athletics, Midwest Dairy is connecting with young adults and their families,

In fall 2024, Midwest Dairy kicked off the partnership with the Sprouts Farmers Market Big 12 Conference Women's Soccer Championship. The event was hosted at the CPKC Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, the first stadium in the world built specifically for a professional women's team.

The four-day championship drew 7,558 in-person attendees and 77,000 TV viewers, who collectively watched 3.7 million minutes of soccer. A mix of field-level signage and fun fan engagement, such as a cheesy dance and song activation, helped drive visibility. A branded "Big 12 Eats" menu featured hot chocolate made with dairy, which proved to be a crowd favorite.

A 60-day post-event digital marketing campaign reached mobile users, achieving a click-through rate between 0.3% and 0.47%, meeting agriculture industry benchmarks. This partnership enabled Midwest Dairy to share memorable messages about

Attendance reached a record 21,309 across four ticketed sessions. Fans enjoyed 600 free servings of milk and cereal and joined in on dairy trivia for a chance to win fun branded giveaways. Local dairy farmers Jack and Patty Dill added authenticity to the messaging around animal care and farmer commitment.

Dairy messaging reached fans through scoreboard engagement and on-mat signage, with "Be Legendairy" prominently displayed during



championship podium moments. The "Big 12 Eats" menu featured dairy-rich items such as the "12 Alarm Mat Burner" chili bowl and "Big 12 Slam pecan tart." ESPN+ viewership topped 669,000, offering major visibility for Undenably Dairy.

An accompanying 30-day mobile ad campaign exceeded expectations with a 1% click-through rate, more than double the industry benchmark, indicating strong post-event interest in dairy.

During the Phillips 66 Big 12 Women's and Men's Basketball Championships in Kansas City, dairy took center stage for 10 action-packed days. Midwest Dairy showed up in full force inside the T-Mobile Center and at the Big 12

Life without dairy isn't sustainable. So dairy is becoming more sustainable.

meeting them where they are, with messaging that builds trust and deepens understanding of dairy's critical role in sustainability. Midwest Dairy used a mix of in-venue and televised signage, digital marketing, fan engagement, and activations to bring dairy to the forefront, one moo at a time.

sustainability and animal care, strategically crafted to resonate with a broad audience and build trust that drives dairy sales.

At the Big 12 Wrestling Championship in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Midwest Dairy welcomed fans with a "Cozy Cow Lounge" at the BOK Center.

OF COLLEGE SPORTS



BLVD Fan Fest, reaching 144,413 ticketed fans and millions more through TV and digital platforms. From courtside videoboards and concession menus to interactive fan activities, dairy was everywhere.

The “Big 12 Eats” featured 80% dairy-based menu items, with each of the 16 Big 12 schools represented by custom dishes. The women’s tournament saw average game viewership rise by 26%, while the men’s games averaged 794,000 viewers, a 22% increase from 2024. USDairy.com received live shoutouts and on-screen visibility during the men’s championship, which drew 2.2 million viewers.

Dairy farmers Byron and Heidi Wells, along with Dwight and Anita Rokey, attended with their families and were recognized on the court during both the women’s and men’s quarterfinal games. Their presence highlighted the sustainability efforts of local dairy farms and reminded fans that dairy farmers aren’t just important to the industry; they are the industry.

Fan Fest activations included a “Moo-ve and Groove” silent disco, where 7,500 attendees enjoyed dairy-themed fun through multiple music channels, photo booths, and athlete influencer collaborations. Athletes from four Big 12 schools acted as “guest DJs” by having a few of their favorite tunes on the playlist. They also promoted the event through Instagram, generating over 393,000 impressions. A post-event digital campaign reached over 762,000 mobile users, achieving

a 0.22% click-through rate, which aligned with internal benchmarks. Notably, 96% of surveyed participants said the Dairy Disco improved their perception of dairy’s environmental sustainability.

With millions reached through live events, broadcast coverage, and digital engagement, this partnership



delivered measurable results and positioned dairy in a bold new spotlight. We’re excited to build on this momentum because in a world seeking real, sustainable solutions, life without dairy simply isn’t one of them.





Wellness Warriors Are Putting Dairy Farmers on the Health Map



In 2025, Midwest Dairy launched the Wellness Warriors program to leverage the expertise of credible dietitian thought leaders in engagements designed to build trust in dairy among school nutritionists, WIC leaders, and other health professionals. These influential dietitians bring expertise in human nutrition, public health, school nutrition, food allergy management, and sustainable food systems. From 2025 through 2026, these Wellness Warriors will be present at conferences, webinars, podcasts, and other platforms to build trust in dairy among influential thought leaders and consumers. Meet a few of these Wellness Warriors below and see what they have been up to!

Cook County Physicians

What started as a spark at Midwest Dairy's 2024 urban farm event in Chicago grew into something powerful this spring. Inspired by that experience, Dr. Yvonne Collins brought a similar event to members of the Cook County Physicians Association (CCPA) in June.

Together with sustainability partner Just Roots, Midwest Dairy hosted a farm-to-table dinner and discussion at the St. James Community Farm in Chicago. Guests toured the urban farm, where half of the food grown is donated, and enjoyed a meal prepared by local chef Sebastian White.

The evening featured impactful conversations with Alicia Nesbary Moore of Herban Produce, dairy farmers Sarah and Andy Lenkaitis, and dietitian Dorian Doss. Dorian Doss is a champion of Midwest Dairy and has recently been activated as a Wellness Warrior. Topics ranged from urban agriculture and sustainable dairy farming to nutrition in Black communities. CCPA members left informed and inspired, citing dairy's health benefits, sustainable farming practices, and its role in reducing disparities as key takeaways.

Arkansas Medical Conference

On June 7, Midwest Dairy partnered with the Arkansas Medical, Dental, and Pharmaceutical Association (AMDPA) to co-host a compelling session during the 2025 AMDPA Scientific Session in Little Rock, Arkansas. The session, *“Roots of Health: Closing the Maternal Gap Through Early Life Nutrition,”* focused on the vital role of maternal nutrition in shaping long-term health outcomes for mothers and their infants.

Wellness Warrior Caroline Weeks, a physician assistant and registered dietitian, led the session with an in-depth presentation on the unique nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating women. Weeks emphasized that nutrition-based interventions, particularly those incorporating dairy foods, can improve maternal and infant health, reduce disparities, and support lifelong well-being.

The session concluded with a panel discussion moderated by Dr. William Greenfield, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. The panel featured diverse perspectives from Weeks; Nicolle Fletcher, a doula and midwife; and Zenobia Harris,

Executive Director of the Arkansas Birthing Project and Acting Director of Birthing Project USA.

The panel addressed persistent maternal health disparities and emphasized the importance of collaborative, community-based solutions. Their discussion highlighted how inclusive partnerships—spanning healthcare providers, public health leaders, and organizations like Midwest Dairy—can help build a healthier future for mothers and their babies through evidence-based nutrition education and outreach.

Region V National Medical Association and Oklahoma Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

To elevate dairy’s role in addressing nutrition equity and health disparities, Midwest Dairy sponsored a session at the Region V National Medical Association’s annual conference in early April in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The session, *“Opportunities to Close the Nutrition Equity Gap: Amplifying Cultural Relevance of Dairy Foods in Tackling Health Disparities,”* was led by Wellness Warrior and registered dietitian Krystal Dunham and moderated by Dr. Donald Peghee.

The presentation sparked thoughtful discussion among physician attendees, particularly about lactose intolerance and the importance of offering real dairy solutions that support the diverse nutritional needs of patients from various cultural backgrounds.

Midwest Dairy also brought the conversation to the Oklahoma Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (OKAND) Spring Conference, once again sponsoring a session led by Krystal Dunham, who also served as OKAND President at the time. Her presentation explored the power of milk, cheese, and yogurt to support wellness across life stages, focusing on public health nutrition, cultural relevance, and nutritional accessibility.

Both events served as foundational touchpoints in Midwest Dairy’s 2025 campaign, which focuses on the critical role of nutrition, including dairy, during the first 1,000 days of life.





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INCREASING DAIRY SALES

How Dairy is Winning in the Digital Aisle

The way we shop for groceries has dramatically transformed over the past few decades, and dairy is keeping pace every step of the way. From in-store shopping to the modern era of one-click convenience, the shopper journey has evolved, and Midwest Dairy is embracing new strategies to stay front and center in both digital and in-store spaces.

Today, marketing success depends more than ever on meeting consumers where they are and, increasingly, that's online.

According to a study conducted by Mintel, just 47% of shoppers now purchase all their groceries in-store. That means 53% blend online and in-store options, and the digital number continues to rise. While Baby Boomers still prefer traditional aisles, younger generations are increasingly turning to the convenience of online grocery shopping.

Shopping habits shape how consumers interact with products. As consumer behavior shifts, dairy promotions must meet them where they are, whether through a digital recipe or store shelf sign.

Most digital shoppers cite time savings as their top reason they add items to their cart. Others say it's easier to track spending (31%), find better prices (41%), or work from past lists (31%). This matters

because once dairy is in the cart, it's more likely to return again and again.

But don't count out in-store shoppers and the value of familiarity, freshness, and the ability to see and touch items. In fact, 46% worry about freshness, and 30% don't trust others to choose substitutions.

Both digital and physical shoppers deserve our attention. That's exactly what an integrated marketing strategy delivers. Social media, digital ads, email marketing, packaging, podcasts, in-store signage, and influencer content are all part of the consumer touchpoint ecosystem. This unified approach, ensures that every tactic works together to deliver a consistent message.

This means dairy promotions must not only work at the dairy case but also in the palm of a shopper's hand. Whether browsing TikTok, scanning coupons, or comparing brands online, marketers have the opportunity to influence their choices.

Online grocery shopping isn't new, but it has rapidly evolved since it was first created in 1989. Fast forward to the pandemic, necessity shifted online shopping from optional to essential. "Buy Online, Pick Up In Store"

exploded in popularity. Stores installed pickup lanes, built separate buildings, and trained in-store shoppers.

Before the pandemic, only 32% of consumers used online grocery services. By 2024, that number had jumped to 53%. The growth continues, as our research shows that the online segment is projected to grow at a compound annual rate of 8.9% through 2029. That's more than five times the rate of in-store growth. By 2029, online grocery sales are expected to account for 17% of all U.S. grocery sales.

Even in physical stores, digital touchpoints matter. Consumers often consult apps, scan QR codes, check reviews, and search for recipes, all while standing in the dairy aisle. Sixty percent of shoppers say they notice products in-store *after* seeing ads online or on social media.

Midwest Dairy partners with retailers on hybrid strategies, pairing in-store signage with digital ads, video with email, and product placement with influencer recipes to drive awareness and sales. The path to purchase is now a web of experiences, so checkoff efforts stay flexible to keep dairy visible at every key touchpoint.