



## Supporting research in dairy

Midwest Dairy invests dairy checkoff dollars in a variety of ways, one of which is ongoing product and food safety research. The Midwest Dairy Food Research Center (MDFRC) has been hard at work throughout the year, funding research projects that help build trust in dairy and drive dairy demand worldwide.

Each year, MDFRC works with industry leaders and representatives to share the biggest issues facing the industry during a research planning meeting. From there, research proposals are solicited to address these problems from professors located at six universities: University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, South Dakota State University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Kansas State University, and the University of Missouri.

In 2021, a total of 17 pre-proposals were received and 10 were presented at the MDFRC annual meeting to dairy industry representatives who provided their feedback and voted on which were most important to them. From this, four projects were selected to be funded in 2021 that focused on supporting the following needs:

- **Exports:** With 96% of dairy consumers living outside of the United States, how does the dairy industry grow their exports of cheese and powders?
- **Consumer Solutions:** Knowing that consumers are increasingly focused on clean labels (easy-to-read and understand ingredients), what can the dairy industry do to improve consumer accessibility?
- **Food Safety:** Consumers want to know the products they're enjoying are safe, so how do we increase the safety of dairy products?
- **Sustainability:** With an increased focus on sustainability in the dairy industry, how do we reduce the footprint of the industry?

Despite COVID restrictions, most projects funded in 2020 are progressing as per the plan. In one of the on-going projects at South Dakota State University, Dr. Sanjeev Anand and his team continue to be successful in purifying an antimicrobial compound which is effective against a wide range of bacteria.

During 2022-2023, the research projects chosen to be funded answer similar needs, including consumer solutions, food safety, and sustainability. They are:

- *Cost-Effective, Portable, and Field-Deployable GMR Platform for the Multiplexed Detection of Foodborne Listeria monocytogenes in Dairy Foods and Processing Environments.* This project will develop a low-cost rapid method to test for Listeria in processing floors, drains, and other areas to help improve the safety of dairy products.
- *Cold Plasma Project.* Cold plasma is a non-thermal technology, killing pathogens in milk without heat. The first step in this project is to review the body of knowledge that has already been established, followed by applying the changes to cold plasma in milk and determining what that means for farms and processing facilities. The goal of this project is to provide dairy farmers and processors alternatives to extend the shelf-life.
- *Broad-spectrum Natural Antimicrobial Fermentate Mixture to Prevent Spoilage and Extend the Shelf Life of Shredded Cheese.* This project, the most requested during the final selection phase, would help develop replacements or alternatives to *Natamycin*. This would support the industry's need for a clean-label anti-mold alternative that naturally extends the shelf life of shredded cheese.
- *Effect of Dairy Protein Gel Particles on Physical and Sensory Properties of Ice Cream.* Currently, non-dairy based ingredients are used to stabilize the emulsion process when ice cream is made. This research will study the use of whey protein gels (a dairy-derived ingredient) as an alternative ingredient, thereby reducing the concentration of or completely removing non-dairy ingredients. This will help the dairy industry further its goal of clean-label products for consumers.

Midwest Dairy is proud to support these research projects and the efforts they're making into solving current and future challenges of the dairy industry.



## ADVANCE RESEARCH IN DAIRY

## GROW TRUST IN DAIRY



# Get to know the new “What You Do, Dairy Does Too”

With the goal of connecting with Gen Z consumers to build trust and drive demand, Midwest Dairy has created a marketing campaign – “What You Do, Dairy Does Too” – to help young consumers see that dairy farmers are just like them: people who care about the environment, their neighbors, and their communities. Although we’ve shone the spotlight on dairy’s local and environmental aspects before, this fully integrated effort is the inaugural campaign focusing first and foremost on sustainability.

In addition to the importance of sustainability, research shows that Gen Z consumers prefer getting information from videos, and they appreciate colorful, engaging images and infographic-like materials. Because of this a “What You Do, Dairy Does Too” toolkit has been developed with these insights in mind.

The toolkit is available for partners and farmers to download on [MidwestDairy.com](http://MidwestDairy.com) and includes things such as bright, fun banner artwork that can be displayed in-store or on the farm, shareable videos, social media images and copy, infographics, a scavenger hunt and more, making it easier than ever to help spread sustainability messages that resonate with consumers. We are encouraging farmers just like you to access this toolkit

and see how the resources can help you connect with Gen Z in your area. Whether it’s adding a poster to a popular resting spot on your farm tour, or posting an infographic on social media, no effort is too small when it comes to helping build authentic connections with our next generation of consumers.

To bring this campaign to life, Midwest Dairy is working with many partners. Recently, we teamed up with three social media influencers to reach key audiences by using short- and long-form video content to showcase how dairy is sustainable. The videos highlight the parallels between small changes we all make in our homes to live more sustainable lives and things dairy farmers have been doing for years – including composting, recycling and conserving energy. This effort resulted in more than 2,500,000 impressions, extending our messages to those who might not otherwise see them. Currently, we’re working to build more partnerships, from retail to schools, that will help bring the “What You Do, Dairy Does Too” theme to life across the region, allowing consumers to see the modern, engaging messaging in action.

After interacting with this campaign, we want consumers to view dairy farmers and dairy foods as far more

## INCREASE DAIRY SALES



# When the weather cools down, beverage options heat up



Midwest Dairy is successfully partnering with schools across our 10-state region to create innovative in-school meal programs that incorporate a variety of on-trend options kids are asking for. By focusing on how food trends impact what kids will choose for meals and snacks, we’ve been able to create new programs that are not only moving the

needle when it comes to more dairy consumption throughout the day, but also building lifelong dairy consumers along the way. You may have heard positive things about the smoothie

programs being implicated in schools, but as the season changed, a new opportunity presented itself when encouraging them to drink milk in their everyday diets.

As winter quickly arrived kids needed more “seasonal” options. We have found heating chocolate milk to serve as hot chocolate is a great way to increase milk consumption, making a tried-and-true beverage a fun, trendy, delicious treat. This is a great option for schools that it is also part of a reimbursable meal as the student’s milk choice, creating a



# campaign

progressive than they originally thought, understanding that dairy is produced with the utmost care for the planet. Our goal is to get them feeling good about choosing dairy, and truly believe that what farmers do is good for the Earth, our neighbors and our communities. We truly believe if the dairy industry works together as a united front to build trust where our values align – in our community and commitment to sustainability – we can reach Gen Z now, to ensure a strong future and demand for dairy.

**UNDENIABLY DAIRY**  
YOUR LOCAL FARM FAMILIES

*You Do Your Part.*  
**#DairyDoesToo**

Think you have nothing in common with today's dairy farmers? Think again. These hard-working families prioritize their communities, their animals, and the environment—just like you do.  
See how the dairy industry is becoming carbon neutral by 2050 at [USDairy.com/sustainability](http://USDairy.com/sustainability)

**You Love Your Community.**  
#DairyDoesToo

- 3 Million People** are employed by the dairy industry nationwide
- 95%** of dairy farms are **Family-Owned**
- 30%** of all farmers are **Women**

**You Care For Animals.**  
#DairyDoesToo

- Healthy**: Veterinarians and nutritionists keep cows
- Happy**: Hoof trimmers and back scratching machines keep cows
- Comfortable**: Sand bedding, fans and water misters keep cows

**You Value Sustainability.**  
#DairyDoesToo

- 90%** less land (Compared to 70 years ago, making a gallon of milk now requires...)
- 65%** less water
- 63%** smaller carbon footprint

win-win for both the students and the school. Midwest Dairy has created a toolkit that can be found on our website which provides additional resources for schools to help implement hot chocolate milk programs and get more dairy into students' hands. By paying attention to kids' shifting needs and preferences throughout the year and seasons, Midwest Dairy is creating programs that not only increase dairy consumption now but will also continue to have an impact on driving demand as these kids make beverage choices outside of school.

As kids continue their school year, and current learning environments continue to adapt, Midwest Dairy works hard to stay ahead of what kids and their parents are looking for

when it comes to dairy choices. We are continually looking to partner with school nutrition professionals to find new and innovative ways to give students a fun and positive dairy experience that provides the important nutrition they need while continuing to drive dairy demand now and into the future. And while the trends evolve over the years, one thing will remain constant: dairy will continue to play a leading role in helping schools provide the healthy, nutritious, and fun food options that kids of all ages will continue to love for generations to come.



## Congratulations to Midwest dairy farmer Kenton Holle, recipient of the Richard E. Lyng award

Help us in congratulating Kenton Holle of Mandan, North Dakota, who is the honored recipient of this year's Richard E. Lyng award. This prestigious honor recognizes industry leaders who have made a significant contribution to dairy promotion that benefits the entire industry not only locally but also nationally. This award was named after former U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Richard E. Lyng who, over 30 years ago, played an important role in implementing policies that led to the establishment of the National Dairy Board.

It is no surprise Holle was a worthy nominee for this award as his impact on the industry is easily recognizable. Holle's over 15 years of serving in leadership roles at local, regional, and national checkoff levels have allowed him to serve the dairy industry with great impact. He gave 14 years of service to both Midwest Dairy's North Dakota division board (NDB) and the Midwest Dairy corporate board, allowing him to make numerous

contributions to the industry, championing the work of checkoff as it continues to fuel demand for dairy. Along with his standing on the boards above and being chairman of the NDB, one of Holle's biggest accomplishments includes being a part of the United Marketing Plan and getting to watch the development of the U.S. Dairy Innovation Center which he remembers at the time seemed like something beyond possible. Now, he is pleased to see it continue to bring forth the results that exceed the board's planning ideas.

"This award celebrates farmers who have shown a long-standing commitment and dedication to dairy promotion," said Alex Peterson, Missouri dairy farmer and chair of the NDB. "Holle exemplifies this leadership with a more than 15-year commitment to advancing farmer priorities nationally, regionally and locally."

His passion for the industry runs deep as he is a third-generation farmer and prides himself on his family farm that he and his wife of 43 years, Bobby Jo, have grown to what it is today. Their three sons, Andrew, Michael, James, and their families have all stayed connected to the dairy industry in some way, and Holle is excited to pass the family farm down to the next generation.

This annual award was presented to Holle at the National Dairy Board meeting as part of the Joint Annual Meeting in Las Vegas on November 15th. Again, thank you Holle for your years of giving service to the industry and your commitment to leading by example, congratulations on this well-deserved achievement.





# Your Dairy Checkoff podcast episode 5: “Is the dairy checkoff really working and worth the money?” recap

It's a time-honored question that we at Midwest Dairy often hear: What is the impact of my dairy checkoff investment? It's an important one to ask! Dairy farmers Jess Peters from Pennsylvania and Larry Hancock from Texas ask this question and more in the new episode of Your Dairy Checkoff Podcast as they converse with Lucas Lentsch, chief federation officer for Dairy Management Inc. (DMI), and Peter Vitaliano, VP of Economic Policy and Market Research at National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), about the value of the dairy checkoff. Join the conversation as they gain a better understanding of how the national and local dairy checkoffs are working to drive trust and sales of dairy products, and most importantly, ensure farmers still have a voice once milk leaves the farm.

To really understand where your checkoff dollars go, we must first go back to the beginning. In 1983, Congress created the dairy checkoff on behalf of U.S. dairy farmers to deal with the ongoing surplus of milk. Today the checkoff has grown into an organization made up of national and local dairy checkoffs that work on behalf of all America's dairy farmers and dairy importers to drive trust and sales of U.S. dairy products. But most importantly checkoff ensures farmers are collectively heard. This happens through a unified effort between national and local farmer leadership, in addition to staff who represent your voice in the dairy industry with consumers, invest in research to better the industry, insights, and

expertise, and collaborate with partners to achieve shared goals. Tune into this episode to really take a deep dive into the topics mentioned above as well as hear examples of current programs being implicated.

Farmers on a national and state level collectively work with checkoff staff to suggest, monitor, and better understand the strategies being implicated and the tactics of relationships being brought to life. That's why when it comes to the dairy checkoff, Midwest Dairy is an open book. We understand the importance of sharing with our farmers where their money is truly making an impact, and we are happy to answer any questions you may have. You can stay in touch with Midwest Dairy by having one on one conversations with farmer relations managers and by regularly visiting the Midwest Dairy website to read the latest editions of Promotion in Action, Dairy Promotion Update, and our Annual Reports. You can also follow Midwest Dairy on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter for the latest updates. In addition, Your Dairy Checkoff Podcast, with farmer hosts from all over the United States, is an excellent resource to help you stay in tune with what your checkoff dollars are doing, and we encourage you to subscribe!

Find episodes of Your Dairy Checkoff Podcast at [www.dairycheckoffpodcast.com](http://www.dairycheckoffpodcast.com) or on your favorite podcast platform.

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#### Visit [MidwestDairy.com](http://MidwestDairy.com)

- To stay up-to-date on checkoff efforts
- To access the Promo Center, or call 1-877-360-FARM (3276)

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## Midwest Dairy staff is honored to work for you



The staff at Midwest Dairy recognizes the passion Midwest dairy farmers bring to dairy promotion and appreciates the opportunity to represent you when building demand and trust for farmers and dairy products with partners and consumers.

We have found consumers love to hear from farmers directly. We are grateful for your grassroots efforts to promote dairy in your own communities. We also appreciate the dairy farmers who participate in Midwest Dairy projects. In the new year we encourage you to continue to utilize the promotion service center, Undeniably Dairy grants, plus your own voice through farm tours and social media platforms to help share your story. Both the promotion center and Undeniably Dairy grants are found at [www.Midwestdairy.com](http://www.Midwestdairy.com).

As you make your way through this issue, help us celebrate this year's Richard E. Lyng award winner, gain a better understanding of the check-off, and see how dairy products and dairy in general are making a splash in communities across the Midwest. Our staff will continue to be your biggest advocates when it comes to these promotions and partnerships that build trust in farmers and demand for dairy products!

**Molly Pelzer**  
Midwest Dairy CEO



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- Your Dairy Checkoff podcast breaks down how checkoff really works
- Dairy checkoff dollars invest in ongoing product and food safety research
- Get to know the new "What You Do, Dairy Does Too" campaign
- Hot Chocolate Milk stations hit schools during the holidays
- Celebrating the Midwest dairy farmer recipient of the Richard E. Lyng award

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