

SPRING 2025

# DAIRY PROMOTION

## Update



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**MAKING  
EVERY  
DROP  
COUNT**



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## CEO REMARKS



As we step into spring, I want to take a moment to reflect on the vital role farming plays in our lives and the promise this season brings. Spring is a time of renewal and growth, when your hard work begins to grow into flourishing crops, and with fewer weather disruptions (hopefully), animal care becomes a little easier.

This season is not just about planting; it's a celebration of resilience and innovation in agriculture. By nurturing the earth, you also lay the foundation for practices that will sustain and feed communities for generations.

As we embrace the opportunities of spring, Midwest Dairy staff support you, recognizing the dedication it takes to care for your land and cows responsibly. Together, we can continue building trust and increasing dairy sales while expanding dairy research and fostering the next generation of leaders. As you gear up for a productive season ahead, I wish you and your family safety and health.

*Respectfully yours,*

**Corey Scott**

## CHAIR REMARKS



Hello, fellow dairy farmers and friends. As many of you know, this winter has been quite cold, with little snowfall across much of the upper Midwest. Farming presents unique challenges when temperatures drop to negative 25 degrees for several days.

However, I am hopeful that we will all enjoy an early spring, as the weather shifts toward warmer, spring-like temperatures.

I am excited to share a few highlights from the 2024 year-end reports. For the first time since 2009, fluid milk consumption has shown a slight increase. Innovations in the category and consumers' preference for whole milk have contributed to this rise. This past year, we saw unique products like Star Wars, Moana, and even Santa milk. Meanwhile, sales of alternative imitation beverages continue to decline. Another positive development for dairy farmers is America's growing preference for real butter. We are experiencing record demand for butter year-round. If you remember, the butter board craze took off a couple of Christmases ago. This trend went viral thanks to a social media influencer collaborating with dairy checkoff support.

I was also proud to see Midwest Dairy partner with Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steakburgers to create a grilled cheese steakburger. This delicious burger features four slices of cheese and has recently been added as a full-time menu offering. Innovation in this space has helped U.S. per capita cheese consumption reach record highs.

DairyCheckoff.com is a new smartphone-friendly website for dairy farmers, providing answers about your checkoff investment. It features quick links to exports, growing dairy demand, health and nutrition, research, sustainability, and youth wellness. You'll also find the Your Dairy Checkoff Podcast, news stories, and contact information for farmer Board members. Check it out!

As we enter spring, I wish you all a safe and productive planting season. Thank you for all your hard work in feeding a hungry world!

*Respectfully yours,*

**Charles Krause**

# The 2024 Annual Report is now available

The 2024 Annual Report is now available at [www.MidwestDairy.com](http://www.MidwestDairy.com). Midwest Dairy’s fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31, and the report is released every April. It provides an overview of the previous year’s programs and activities, remarks from the Board chair and CEO, financial reports, and other important information.

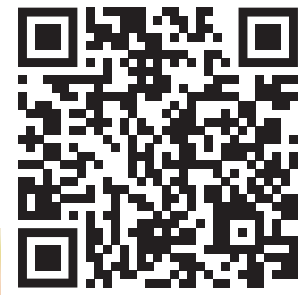
Midwest Dairy’s work continues year-round and extends beyond a singular calendar year. Many initiatives span multiple years as we build strong partnerships and campaigns that promote trust and increase sales of dairy products. While this report will not capture every project that the Midwest Dairy staff worked on in 2024, it will highlight some key achievements from the year. The annual report focuses on four core strategies: Sales, Trust,

Research, and Developing Farmer Leaders.

Midwest Dairy allocates checkoff funds to local, national, and global initiatives, adapting to an ever-changing marketplace. Our approach remains robust, collaborating with industry partners who co-invest in initiatives that enhance the resources of the checkoff, amplify the farmer’s voice, and increase the impact of dairy products. The Board, composed of dairy farmers, reviews and approves the strategic plan while guiding Midwest Dairy’s activities. Strategies and outcomes are regularly assessed to align with Board priorities, meet evolving consumer needs, and adapt to industry change.

We encourage all farmers to review the Annual Report. Staying informed about

checkoff work is essential for dairy farmers and industry stakeholders. Understanding checkoff-funded initiatives and programs helps farmers see the value of their contributions and the collective effort to promote dairy. It also fosters transparency and accountability within the industry, ensuring that strategies align with the needs of both farmers and consumers. By being informed, farmers can actively participate in discussions, contribute ideas, and help shape future initiatives, ultimately enhancing the impact of their checkoff investments and fostering a stronger dairy community. **Please visit the website page by using the QR code below to access the 2024 Annual Report!**



# Learn about Midwest Dairy's

Midwest Dairy proudly represents over 4,000 dairy farms to 41 million consumers across the 10-state region. Checkoff works on your behalf to build dairy demand by inspiring consumer confidence in dairy products and production practices. We achieve these goals with the strategic objectives listed below by working with and through partners.



## INCREASE DAIRY SALES

Our goal is to **increase dairy sales by 24 million pounds of milk each year** through retail and food service partnerships, focusing on milk volume and sales opportunities. We provide value to our partners by delivering dairy expertise and insights, to help them make informed decisions and drive sales growth.



**Martha Kemper**



## TRUST

Midwest Dairy is focused on **building consumer trust**, as research links higher trust in dairy to increased purchases. A key factor in trust is the consumer's perception that dairy is environmentally sustainable. Because Gen Z spends eight hours per day on a device and more than four hours a day on social media, Midwest Dairy is partnering with influencers to help tell dairy's sustainable nutrition story. To reinforce dairy's story, we also want to engage in surround-sound experiential and social activation opportunities around college campuses. Because Gen Z trusts academic research and evidence as a trusted source for sustainability, we work with sustainability thought leaders while also engaging the student body to bring dairy to life and grow trust. Gen Z's interest in where their food comes from presents an opportunity to incorporate dairy into science education through high-quality materials and professional development, connecting with 91% of high school students who lack agricultural ties.



**Eir Garcia Silva**



**Lela Fausze**

In our trust-building efforts, we engage thought leaders who can influence other leaders and shape consumer opinions. We build strong relationships with key stakeholders so they will support and endorse dairy in critical decision-making forums, such as the development of dietary guidelines. Educating them on dairy's nutritional value and farmers' commitment to animal and environmental care fosters a positive perception of dairy. This inspires voluntary advocacy for dairy in influential circles, making it a key topic of discussion.

# strategic objectives for 2025



## RESEARCH

A key value that Midwest Dairy offers is the ability to **provide consumer research and insights to our partners**, enabling them to make informed business decisions within the marketplace. Our three-year goal is to use this industry knowledge to positively impact at least 50 business decisions made by processors and sales partners. One notable initiative

in this category is the Midwest Dairy Food Research Center (MDFRC). This center is a collaboration between dairy farmers and universities in the Midwest, aimed at providing research and education that benefit consumers and support a strong market for dairy products. The MDFRC collaborates with six universities to advance dairy research and provide essential

resources for the dairy industry. Midwest Dairy also works with entrepreneurs to encourage innovation in the development of new dairy products.



## DEVELOPING LEADERS

Midwest Dairy works with dairy farmers across our 10-state region to help them share their dairy stories in their communities. We provide resources for consumer engagement, crisis preparedness, media training, and more. Our goal is to empower farmers to showcase their farms and advocate for the dairy industry through grants, training programs,

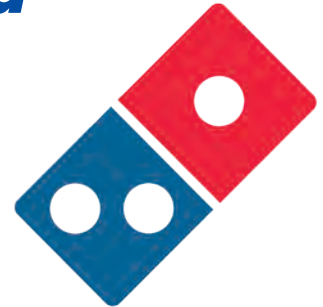
and marketing materials. This strategy includes an online promotional center filled with engaging conversation starters about dairy designed to attract a crowd. Additionally, Midwest Dairy **invests in the next generation of dairy leaders** through programs, scholarships, and internships, paving the way for continued success in the dairy industry.



Mitch Schulte



# Cheese meets pizza as Dairy checkoff teams up with Domino's for a flavorful partnership



Dairy checkoff has a long-standing, impactful partnership with Domino's, which has evolved over time to consistently benefit their business growth and increase the volume of dairy used on their menus. This dynamic partnership has an almost two-decade history of working together to build demand for dairy products.

Over the past 16 years, checkoff and Domino's have accomplished a great deal together. Domino's has become the largest quick-service restaurant pizza brand, demonstrating the incredible value of the partnership.

**Additionally, the company has more than doubled the total amount of cheese used on menus during this partnership time frame, surpassing 3 billion pounds. However, this extends beyond the United States.**

In 2019, the collaboration expanded to Japan, followed by Taiwan in 2021 and the Middle East/North Africa in 2022. These expansions were aimed at increasing the international volume of U.S. cheese. International partnerships operate similarly to domestic ones and have significantly increased overall U.S. cheese utilization.

Domino's prioritizes consumer preferences and adapts its strategies to meet evolving customer needs. U.S. dairy has been critical to its success, and the partnership continually adapts to sell more menu items with U.S. cheese. Domino's is dedicated to supporting the U.S. dairy industry and American farmers through various marketing and communication efforts. In the U.S., this has included adding the Undeniably Dairy logo to pizza boxes and napkin holders and creating custom posts and videos for June Dairy Month. These promotions are featured on Domino's social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. They also have supported National Farmer's Day by featuring it on their website's "Pizza Tracker" page, all at their own expense, without checkoff investment.

Over the years, there have been many successful campaigns with Domino's, including the 1 kg pizza launched in Japan and Taiwan. Each pizza featured more than two pounds of cheese! This product continues to be relaunched in international markets, garnering strong consumer appeal. The Smart Slice has also emerged as another

success story from this partnership. This was developed in 2010 to meet the school nutrition guidelines required for the National School Lunch Program. At that time, Domino's was the only national chain able to meet those standards. The Dairy checkoff worked closely with Domino's to achieve the perfect flavor and melt for 100 percent Real Lite Mozzarella Cheese, which features lower fat and sodium (with nearly 1 pound of cheese per Smart Slice pizza).

As of the 2023-2024 school year, Domino's Smart Slice is available in 1,300 school districts and served in over 14,000 schools across the United States. With total sales of 69 million dollars, 3 million pounds of lite





## **NEW** 5-CHEESE MAC & CHEESE

mozzarella cheese were used for an estimated 56 million slices served!

**In 2024, checkoff partnered with Domino's to emphasize delicious food and renowned value, with cheese taking center stage of the initiative.**

Highlighting the delicious food was easy, thanks to two successful product launches: New York Style Pizza and 5-Cheese Mac & Cheese. The co-investment in this partnership

supports product and consumer testing and amplifies product launches. This allows Domino's to excel in its core strengths—creating delicious food, delighting consumers, and crafting impactful marketing campaigns. Checkoff contributed to their successful and popular Emergency Pizza 2.0 in 2024. This promotion allowed customers to receive a free medium two-topping pizza when they need it most, accessible through the loyalty program. Ultimately, it is designed to increase sales by encouraging

consumers to eat more pizza – topped with delicious cheese.

In the new year, you can expect more new product news in early 2025 as Domino's offers more delicious menu items with cheese front and center! Domino's continues to demonstrate its value as a partner every day by driving dairy sales in the United States and beyond.



# BUILDING

## How social influencers are partnering

Midwest Dairy has successfully partnered with online influencers to connect with Gen Z and adult consumers by showcasing stories about sustainable nutrition in dairy. These influencers use their trusted platforms to promote dairy products and experiences. As a result, Midwest Dairy has increased dairy product visibility, expanded its reach to target audiences, and boosted sales through authentic content about dairy. Social media is a multibillion-dollar industry that drives more engagement than other entertainment sectors, reinforcing its value as a key tool for Midwest Dairy to connect with consumers.

**Midwest Dairy expanded its influencer relationships during the second half of 2024.** Keep reading to learn about these influencer activations!

### “Cheesy Season” engages influencers

In the fall and early winter of 2024, as food discussions heightened ahead of the holidays, Midwest Dairy launched a campaign called “Cheesy Season.” This campaign showcased dairy’s versatility and enjoyment through strategic partnerships with influencers. The goal was to raise awareness and engage Gen Z and parents across key digital platforms.

Midwest Dairy collaborated with influencers such as **Faith Enokian**, **Molly Yeh**, and newlyweds **Jay and Channing** to produce engaging content for Instagram and TikTok. The campaign generated 10.1 million impressions, including 2.3 million organic impressions. It also achieved a strong average organic engagement rate of 5.74%, surpassing industry benchmarks.

The campaign featured interactive challenges, day-in-the-life videos, and recipe tutorials to emphasize dairy’s versatility, sustainability, and kitchen fun. Gen Z responded particularly

well to humor, interactive content, and visually dynamic storytelling, confirming the importance of these strategies for future campaigns.

Here are a few links to top-performing posts. Check them out!

### Molly Yeh’s seasonal specialty recipe for any-butter cookie bars.



### Jay and Chan’s cheese pull competition got heated... literally.



### Faith’s “day in the life” cheese haul.





# BRIDGES:

## with checkoff to share the dairy story

### Influencers highlight dairy's role in the first 1,000 days of life

In fall 2024, Midwest Dairy partnered with TikTok creators to emphasize dairy's vital role in a child's first 1,000 days of life. This initiative educated parents and caregivers about the nutritional benefits of dairy for early development through engaging and informative content from trusted parenting voices. Research shows that the first 1,000 days of life from conception to a child's second birthday are crucial for brain development, physical growth, and immune strength. Dairy, rich in essential nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, and protein, is a

foundational part of a child's diet during this time. Midwest Dairy worked with medical experts and popular influencers to share this vital message in a way that resonated with today's parents.

Four medical experts launched the campaign by creating TikTok videos explaining the benefits of dairy during a child's first 1,000 days. They highlighted how dairy supports healthy bones, teeth, and overall growth in young children, laying the foundation for a more resilient and active future. After the medical experts posted their

videos, parent influencers shared them and added their personal stories. This strategy broadened the reach, while keeping the message authentic and relatable. A couple of the high performing videos were produced by [@skyehitchcock](#) and [@itsbethanymorris](#).

The collaboration exceeded expectations, generating 2.6 million impressions. By leveraging both organic and paid media strategies, the campaign reached a wide audience, including parents, caregivers, and health-conscious individuals.

### Influencer campaign highlights animal care and sustainability

In 2024, Illinois Farm Families (IFF) collaborated with Midwest Dairy on a strategic influencer campaign to increase awareness and trust among Chicago consumers about the practices of Illinois farmers. The campaign highlighted themes such as family farming, animal care, and sustainability. It focused on connecting consumers directly with farm experiences through the perspectives of relatable and trusted influencers. Two prominent influencers — [Christina Chu](#), a sports dietitian, and [Aneta Linko](#), a parenting blogger — connected Chicago-based audiences to Illinois dairy farm families.



Christina was invited to Lenkaitis Dairy Farm, located in Illinois to gain firsthand experience in animal care and nutrition. In

her content, she emphasized the shared mission of dairy nutritionists and dietitians to ensure the health and well-being of dairy cows. Her unique perspective as a dietitian allowed her to highlight dairy's nutritional importance and the crucial role of proper animal care in producing high-quality goods. Christina shared a post titled

*"10 Things I Learned from an Illinois Dairy Farmer,"* providing deeper insight into her on-farm experience. She showcased key information about dairy cow diets, daily routines, and the state-of-the-art equipment used to maintain the farm. This bonus content resonated with her audience, providing educational value, while highlighting the behind-the-scenes commitment to animal welfare and sustainable farming practices.



# BUILDING BRIDGES:

## How social influencers are partnering with checkoff to share the dairy story

(CONTINUED)



Aneta, a Chicago parenting blogger, engaged fellow parents with Midwest Dairy's key messages about animal care.

In early December, Aneta also visited Lenkaitis Dairy Farm with her family. Through her content, Aneta highlighted the importance of animal

care on the farm, the family values that guide the operation, and the quality of dairy products it produces. Her relatable storytelling resonated with parents who were interested in where their food comes from and how it is produced.

Collaborating with influencers produced remarkable outcomes,

reaching a broad audience and fostering significant engagement. The influencers generated 255,048 impressions and 55,981 engagements. The campaign boosted awareness and engagement among consumers in Illinois, highlighting the significance of family farming, animal care, and sustainability within the dairy farming industry.

### Driving conversations about dairy on TikTok

Because many consumers use TikTok as a source of information and education, Midwest Dairy worked to drive conversation about dairy farming, emphasizing cow care and industry sustainability efforts like water conservation.

Midwest Dairy collaborated with 34 influencers to produce 39 videos. Most of the participants were Gen Z influencers or had a strong Gen Z following. This diverse group of influencers included mothers, athletes, fitness creators, and others who highlighted the benefits of dairy

through recipe demos and day-in-the-life recaps. Their goal was to demonstrate how dairy authentically integrates into their everyday lives.

Top-performing videos included:



[@courtneyrolson](#)



[@jessicajordan44](#)



[@adventuresinoklahoma](#)

The videos generated 5.26 million impressions, exceeding Midwest Dairy's original goal of 4 million by 29%. Midwest Dairy also conducted a brand lift study to assess whether the campaign successfully changed perceptions and built trust. Compared to those who did not see the videos, individuals exposed to the videos had an 11-point increase in their perception of dairy animals being treated humanely and a 5-point increase in their view of dairy farmers as environmentally friendly.

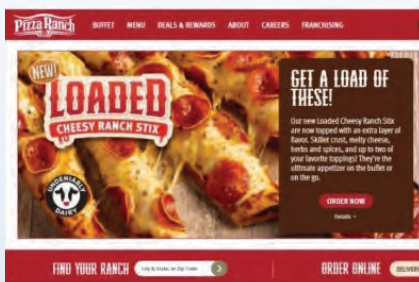


# 2024 Pizza Ranch partnerships deliver



Midwest Dairy has seen success by collaborating with partners in the pizza industry. Research shows that American families love pizza, which ranks among the top five most-ordered menu items. About a quarter of Americans eat pizza at least twice a week and pizza restaurants use more cheese than any other food establishment. Pizza is a staple enjoyed by people of all ages and backgrounds, making it an important focus for Midwest Dairy.

In 2022, Midwest Dairy first partnered with Pizza Ranch to enhance its classic appetizer, **Cheesy Ranch Stix**, by doubling the cheese on this customer favorite. The item was so popular that Pizza Ranch kept this extra-cheesy item on the menu after the promotion. Because of Pizza Ranch's increasing popularity, Midwest Dairy partnered with them again in early 2024 to launch **Loaded Cheesy Ranch Stix**.



This promotion allowed customers to add up to two toppings to their Cheesy Ranch Stix while still being able to add extra cheese. This new cheesy menu innovation ran from February through April 2024. It was available to go and in-store on the buffet.

The launch of this exciting menu addition was supported by various marketing strategies. These strategies included digital display ads, social media ads, direct mailers, in-restaurant point-of-sale promotions, email marketing, website marketing, and app marketing. As a result, customers learned about the Loaded Cheesy Ranch Stix from multiple sources.



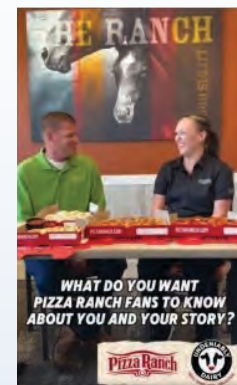
Pizza Ranch showcased the Undeniably Dairy logo on its homepage and the online ordering page. The campaign generated nearly 57 million impressions. Notably, almost 30% of all takeout orders included either Regular or Loaded Cheesy Ranch Stix during the promotional period. **As a result of this campaign, cheese usage increased by nearly 600,000 additional pounds of milk.**

Midwest Dairy and Pizza Ranch partnered once again in the fourth quarter of 2024. The challenging economy made it difficult for the restaurant industry as consumers began to prioritize their spending based on value. They sought good value, which included affordable prices, high-quality food, and discounts. To meet these demands, Midwest Dairy and Pizza Ranch focused on delivering these three key attributes of value, promoted the use of cheese, and highlighted the important work that local dairy

farmers do to provide the legendary cheese for Pizza Ranch.

Pizza Ranch enhanced its online ordering experience leading to a partnership focused on a special online deal. This offer, available at 140 Pizza Ranch locations, included two medium single-topping pizzas, a small order of Cheesy Ranch Stix, and a small Cactus Bread for only \$20. The \$20 Deal was exclusively available through online ordering and was promoted extensively through digital marketing channels, including Facebook ads, email, website, and app marketing.

The campaign also featured a social media post showcasing an interview with Adam Maassen of Maassen Dairy, near Orange City, Iowa, where Pizza Ranch is headquartered. In the video, Adam discussed his family's fifth-generation dairy farm and their sustainable



practices, including cow care. This video reached 26% more people than any other boosted post related to the offer, reaching over 650,000 impressions.

During the promotion, Pizza Ranch saw a 19% increase in online transactions year-over-year due to its improved online order experience and exclusive online deals. The \$20 Deal was redeemed over 25,000 times during the promotional timeframe, **driving about 300,000 incremental pounds of milk.**



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## INCREASING DAIRY SALES

# Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steakburgers partnership drives larger sales than the year before

Midwest Dairy is committed to partnering with foodservice companies that have a significant presence in our 10-state region. Our goal is to increase dairy sales through menu innovation, limited-time offers (LTOs), and other strategies that expand sales opportunities for dairy products.

Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steakburgers, based in Wichita, Kansas, operates 538 franchise locations nationwide and is a valued Midwest Dairy partner. In the fall of 2024, Midwest Dairy partnered with Freddy's on an LTO from August to October. One featured item was the Freddy's Grilled Cheese Steakburger, which included

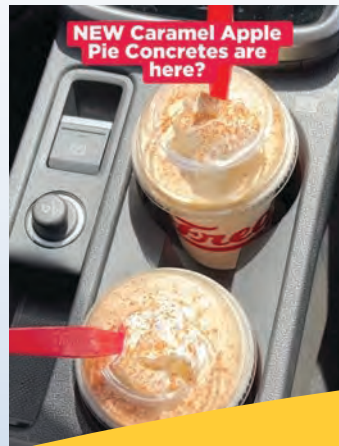
four cheese slices. Freddy's also introduced three limited-time dairy-based dessert items: a Pumpkin Pie Concrete, a Pumpkin Pie Shake, and a new Apple Pie Concrete.

This promotion was supported by a multi-channel marketing effort, including in-store point-of-sale displays, yard signs, menu boards, social media, website, and email.

Midwest Dairy is excited to announce the 2024 campaign achieved incremental sales growth exceeding the results from 2023—an impressive accomplishment. The LTO Grilled Cheese Steakburger once again

emerged as Freddy's fan favorite, surpassing sales targets. The LTO concrete and shakes topped Freddy's sales charts. The campaign resulted in 5.8 million pounds of dairy sold, 500,000 more pounds than the 2023 campaign.

Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steakburgers has added several popular items to its permanent menu, including the Grilled Cheese Steakburger. We are eager to continue exploring partnership opportunities for 2025 to continue driving sales and promote delicious dairy products across their Midwest locations!



*Scan the QR code to listen to the Your Dairy Checkoff Podcast and learn more about Midwest Dairy and Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steakburgers' three-year partnership.*

