



Molly Pelzer
CEO, Midwest Dairy

Shaping the Dairy Industry through Building Dairy Leaders

Through dairy leadership programs, grants and scholarships, Midwest Dairy shapes the next generation of dairy leaders. In 2020, several programs are under way, including the Dairy Ambassador Program, the Dairy Princess Program and Undeniably Dairy grants.

Building on the success of the Iowa Dairy Experience and Agricultural Leadership (IDEAL) program in 2019, we have started a Dairy Experience and Agricultural Leadership (DEAL) program across our 10-state region. We are excited to have 15 young dairy farmers who will participate in the 2020 program. Participants will represent dairy farm families across the Midwest Dairy region while honing important communication skills.

Through these programs, Midwest Dairy recognizes the importance of strong dairy leaders and making important connections for young professionals navigating the agriculture industry. Read more about the DEAL program in the articles below and learn more about Midwest Dairy leadership development opportunities on MidwestDairy.com.

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ENGAGE Training Connects Dairy Farmers from Iowa, Illinois and Minnesota

Midwest Dairy recently hosted a tri-state ENGAGE training in Dubuque, Iowa. Approximately 30 dairy farmers from Iowa, Illinois and Minnesota participated in an interactive communications workshop, while networking with other producers and Midwest dairy ambassadors. The training provided dairy leaders with new skills and techniques they can use to have meaningful conversations with consumers and help build trust in dairy foods and dairy farming.

The meetings kicked off with a networking reception and dinner. A local cheese expert from Hy-Vee led the group in a guided cheese pairing exercise. The next day's four-hour training provided skills, tips and techniques for farmers and ambassadors to have more meaningful conversations with consumers.

Through this training, both dairy farmers and ambassadors learned about issues facing the agriculture industry and how to have conversations with consumers about these issues. Midwest Dairy's Alyson Fendrick, Kendra Anderson and Mitch Schulte led the training, during which they provided information about consumers' attitudes and the important role shared values play in building trust with consumers.

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Dairy Sustainability Alliance Announces 2020 Webinar Series

Knowledge sharing and collaboration are key elements of the Dairy Sustainability Alliance®. In an effort to advance dairy's sustainability progress, Alliance members are presenting their own dairy sustainability work to share learnings that others can adopt, adapt and scale during a 2020 webinar series.

The Dairy Sustainability Alliance announced this webinar as part of the series for 2020:

March 30 – How Conservation Can Make Dairy Farms More Resilient Even in a Lean Agricultural Economy

Given lean times in dairy and agriculture, the economic value of conservation is more important than ever. Mark Rupp (EDF), Chris

Sigmund (TeamAg) and Lindsay Reames (Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association) will present the analysis showing the economic benefits conservation practices can provide when viewed across the full farm budget, incorporating labor, herd health and yield impacts over time, and highlights the importance of good record keeping to taking full advantage of those economic benefits.

Date: Monday, March 30

Time: 2-3 p.m. Central

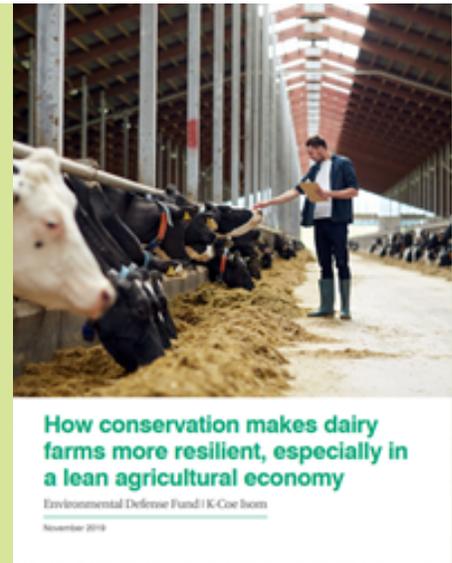
Conference Line: 1-844-212-5500

Conference ID: 8795499

Webinar Link: [Join WebEx](#)

The Dairy Sustainability Alliance's goal is to expand these member-presented webinars into a more regular series. To share a project or initiative from your farm that you think could be implemented or replicated by the broader dairy community, please contact Angela Hessinger at angela.hessinger@dairy.org.

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DEAL Phase One Delivers Success

The first phase of the [Dairy Experience and Agricultural Leadership \(DEAL\) Program](#) kicked off in San Antonio, Texas, earlier this month. Participants learned more about each other, networked with peers and took a deeper dive into the dairy checkoff.

The conference kicked off with a four-color leadership training taught by professional trainer, Tracy Bowe. Attendees learned about their personality strengths and how to use those when working with others. The next day, attendees took a deeper dive into the dairy checkoff. They learned about why the checkoff started, how it has evolved, and what happens on the national and local level. They experienced Texas agriculture both in the classroom and in person when they attended the San Antonio Livestock Show. The conference ended with a consumer insights presentation and a game of dairy jeopardy.

"Feedback has been very positive," said Theresa Reps, Agricultural Affairs manager at Midwest Dairy. "We saw positive growth in all areas between the pre and post-survey."

Additionally, attendees had the chance to rate the conference and provide comments. On a 10-point scale with 10 being excellent, the conference rated 9.33. One survey respondent said, "I learned a lot and am ready to return to my farm and home refreshed and refocused."



In between phase one and phase two, participants will be attending a local division meeting and connecting with local staff. Phase two will be held in the fall of 2020 and will be focused on learning how to engage with consumers.

The 2020-21 DEAL class includes:

- Ashton Atteberry, Conway, Mo.
- Pat Bakeberg, Waverly, Minn.
- Logan Courtney, Chouteau, Okla.
- Dakota Cowger, Peotone, Ill.
- Angie Hildebrandt, South Beloit, Ill.
- Andrew Miron, Hugo, Minn.
- Carie Murman, Glenvil, Neb.
- Tyler Otte, Randolph, Minn.
- Josie Rozum, Ely, Iowa
- Megan Schrupp, Eden Valley, Minn.
- Heath Snodgrass, Orchard, Neb.
- Aaron Titterington, Spence, Iowa
- Rita Vander Kooi, Worthington, Minn.
- Scott VanZyverden, Niangua, Mo.
- Ben Yoder, Hutchinson, Kan.

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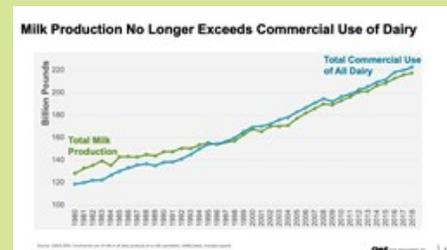
Marilyn Hershey Shares Optimism for Dairy Industry

In a recent [blog post](#), Marilyn Hershey, DMI Chair and Pennsylvania dairy farmer, points to proof that the dairy industry isn't dying despite recent industry challenges. Even with plant-based alternatives on the rise, dairy remains in 97 percent of American households – a saturation level that is extremely high when compared to similar industries.

"While I know we have a concern about plant-based alternatives, consider these numbers: those products have about \$2 billion a year in sales. Total sales of dairy milk in 2019 were \$13.8 billion. Also, 93 percent of U.S. households purchase milk at least once a year, one of the highest penetration categories at retail," explains Hershey.

She acknowledges the recent struggles of many farmers and applauds the dedication of the industry, "I truly believe that we're turning the corner as an industry and better days are on the way. It certainly hasn't been easy, and I always admire the resilience farmers have in weathering the worst that comes our way."

Read the entire [blog post](#) by Hershey, and if you'd like to join the Facebook conversation about national dairy checkoff, ask to join the



[Dairy Checkoff Farmer Group](#). Learn more about Midwest Dairy checkoff activities by following us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#), and request to join the [Midwest Dairy Farmer Network Group](#).

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Gallagher Calls on Dairy Farmers to be Proactive

In a recent [Hoard's Dairyman editorial](#), Dairy Management, Inc. CEO Tom Gallagher talks about why it's vital to dairy's future that dairy farmers not spend time reacting to decisions they don't agree with. Instead, he encourages dairy farmers to focus on the strategies which the dairy industry controls.

Gallagher's article comes on the heels of recent sustainability-related announcements by Starbucks and Brightmark Energy. He provides guidance on how leadership, partnerships and innovation will be key to efforts to maintaining relevance and forward momentum.



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