



Molly Pelzer
CEO, Midwest Dairy

A new year, a new strategic plan

Midwest Dairy has hit the ground running to start 2021 as we kick off our new three-year strategic plan. As I've previously described, our new plan is still focused on the key areas that we've heard from you – through feedback you've given in our annual farmer surveys, among other outlets – what's important to you, our dairy farmers. These include increasing dairy sales and trust, advancing research, creating dairy checkoff advocates, and developing farm and community leaders, but doing so with innovative approaches and new initiatives that really build off the momentum dairy saw over this past year.

We have a variety of initiatives we are excited about in 2021. Some are featured in this issue including:

- Creating new partnerships with thought-leading organizations to focus on the health and nutrition story of dairy.
- Launching the second year of our webinar series which aims to provide retail partners and processors with our expertise helping them drive dairy sales.
- A new farmer website training platform that will be a valuable tool in providing dairy leaders new skills and techniques to help build trust in dairy foods and dairy farming.

We are committed to turning our new strategic plan into action and look forward to regularly sharing the results of this work with you as we move ahead.

IN THIS ISSUE

Safe, healthy, nourished: A new playbook for schools virtual forum

Helping "Got Milk?" reach younger audiences

Dairy sustainability webinar provides new shopper marketing inspiration to Midwest retailers and processors

NFL player Harrison Smith helps tackle hunger

Federation-wide training portal website coming soon

Cheese board consumer campaign

Dairy checkoff pursues partnership with Mayo Clinic

Research uncovers new opportunities for lactose

Midwest Dairy partners with Pizza Ranch to launch breakfast pizzas

Fueling dairy's success through e-commerce channels

Updated dietary guidelines released

[Learn more](#) about your checkoff investment at work!

Safe, healthy, nourished: A new playbook for schools virtual forum



HEALTHIER SCHOOL COMMUNITIES
2020 VIRTUAL FORUM
AN INSIDER'S DISCUSSION FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

"Schools are the epicenters of student well-being," was the rallying cry for the Healthier School Communities Forum on December 15. This virtual event brought together over 750 of the top school, public health, and media experts from across the country to discuss the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and identify solutions to help fight the growing food insecurity many are facing. It was a follow-up to a years-long partnership between Midwest Dairy, the National Dairy Council and GENYOUth to better understand the impact nutrition and wellness has on overall student learning and development, and then, this year, how the pandemic has shed a different light on the important role schools play in providing children with access to food.



Since March 2020, food insecurity has escalated by 20%, reaching Depression-era statistics. One in 4 U.S. children is now living with food insecurity, up from 1 in 7 prior to the pandemic (USDA Economic Research Service, September 2019). The numbers are even more alarming for minority students with 1 in 3 living in food-insecure households.



A panel moderated by Midwest Dairy CEO Molly Pelzer shed light on the value of school wellness. The panel featured Dan Domenech, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators; Dr. Katie Wilson, executive director of the Urban School Food Alliance and Dr. John Skretta, a veteran school superintendent from Nebraska. They discussed the growing face of food insecurity in a COVID-19 world and how the pandemic is impacting schools, administrators, and local communities. Schools are ground zero for fighting hunger in our country as Dr. Wilson commented, "School meals are the best safety net for all children."

GENYOUth CEO, Alexis Glick rounded out the forum with conversations with Dr. Scott Gottlieb, former FDA commissioner and CNN's Chris Cuomo. Dr. Gottlieb discussed the vaccine rollout and how it could aid schools in reopening. He was cautiously optimistic that students might return to the classroom in late winter or early spring. Cuomo talked about how leaders can best share their stories as schools face unprecedented financial challenges. He challenged leaders to "dare to care" and find stories that resonate with the public.

The virtual forum and companion [Healthier School Community report](#) continues dairy farmer's 100-plus year history supporting child health and wellness initiatives. [Click here to listen to the forum.](#)

[Back to top](#)

Helping "Got Milk?" reach younger audiences

As you may have [heard](#), MilkPEP brought back its iconic 'Got Milk?' campaign last August. The goal was to reimagine the campaign on Instagram and TikTok, targeting a younger generation using a range of food, lifestyle, sports, and music personalities including Olympic phenom Katie Ledecky and skateboarding legend Tony Hawk. Midwest Dairy helped amplify MilkPEP's 4-month campaign with paid support to boost influencers' posts. The posts were videos sharing a quirky #GotMilkChallenge or #GotMilkCookieChallenge. The idea was for an influencer to perform a cool trick with milk (or a cookie and milk) and then encourage others to "show me what you got." Our goal was to experiment with reaching a younger audience, particularly adult Gen Z (ages 18-23), while including diverse voices, both groups of which have become a new focus for dairy.



From August through December, dairy engaged the six influencers:

- **[Katie Ledecky - Olympic Swimmer \(Instagram\)](#)**
- **[Tony Hawk - Professional Skateboarder \(Instagram\)](#)**
- **[JuJu Smith-Schuster - Football Player \(Instagram\)](#)**
- **[Andre Drummond - Basketball Player \(Instagram\)](#)**
- **[Crissa Jackson - Harlem Globetrotter \(TikTok\)](#)**
- **[Jason Derulo - Musician \(TikTok\)](#)**

Results were as follows:

- Total impressions: 20,666,360
- Total reach: 11,832,205
- Total engagements: 1,982,325

MilkPEP reported that the 4-month campaign (including our activation) generated 3.6 billion social conversations and 4,000+ videos. Overall, the campaign delivered double the consumer impressions of the 'Milk Life' and 'Milk. Love What's Real' launches combined.

[Back to top](#)

Dairy sustainability webinar provides new shopper marketing inspiration to Midwest retailers and processors

Nearly 100 members of the dairy community gathered virtually on November 3 to hear the latest 2020 learnings about what sustainability means to today's consumer during Midwest Dairy's webinar, [Fostering Dairy Sustainability in Today's Retail Environment](#).

Among the information shared was that half of consumers surveyed say the pandemic has made them more aware of the environment and 58% of Americans say we should respond to climate change with the same urgency we have responded to COVID-19.

[Sarah Hanson](#), executive vice president for the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, joined as a guest speaker during the webinar to share more about the dairy community's [sustainability initiatives and goals](#).

The event wrapped up with Midwest Dairy sharing three new sustainability marketing concepts to inspire Midwest partners to take action in bringing dairy's sustainability story to life for consumers. In a post-webinar survey, three dairy processors and four retailers indicated they plan to use the marketing concepts shared in the webinar with their product and/or in their stores. One processor commented, "this is one of the best webinars I've listened to."

Midwest Dairy plans to continue hosting consumer insights webinars in 2021 to bring the latest consumer learnings to our partner audiences.

[Back to top](#)



NFL player Harrison Smith helps tackle hunger

Dairy Management Inc. (DMI) recently partnered with Subway restaurants and the NFL to demonstrate our collective commitment to supporting our youth and local communities through Fuel Up to Play 60. [Two new programs](#) helped tackle hunger nationally between October 1 and December 31:

- Subway Cares allowed customers to round up their purchase to the nearest dollar to donate to FUTP60 grants for local schools to continue providing school meals during the pandemic.
- 60-cent subs with FUTP60: Every Sunday, any child who uses the FUTP60's "Healthy Habits Tracker" can get a 6-inch sub for only 60 cents, which can include cheese – and they can choose to pair it with milk.

To amplify this initiative in our 10-state region, Midwest Dairy boosted DMI's Facebook and Instagram [@dairygood_posts](#) to targeted consumers for two weeks in November. We also engaged NFL player Harrison Smith (Minnesota Vikings) to share the donation opportunity to his consumer Facebook followers the week of Thanksgiving. We further boosted [his post](#) to consumers in our region for the first two weeks in December.

Results of the campaign are as follows:

[@dairygood_posts to consumers in our 10 states:](#)



- 8,676 impressions
- 5,494 reach
- Clicks, likes, shares: 6

[@HarriSmith22 posts to consumers in 10 states:](#)

- 388,078 impressions
- 71,391 reach
- Clicks, likes, shares: 2,415

Total impressions: 411,762

Total reach: 74,047

Total digital engagements: 3,083

Our engagement rate was 4%, which is higher than the average engagement Facebook and Instagram rates of 1-2%.

To further support this effort, [we invited farmers](#) to share the program on their social platforms and provided opportunities for them to award care packages to frontline heroes.

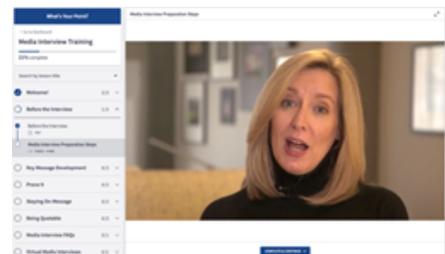
[Back to top](#)

Federation-wide training portal website coming soon

One thing all state and regional organizations have in common is a commitment to helping dairy farmers further develop the skills needed to effectively tell dairy's sustainable nutrition story.

Under the One Team philosophy, a workgroup was created last year to explore a Federation-wide training website that national and local checkoff staff could use to build and share communication and leadership trainings for farmers. Those trainings include media training, social media, crisis, telling your story and more. Among the offerings, Midwest Dairy will feature a course on, "Responding to Media – On and Off Camera" developed by Mary Milla.

The workgroup is being led by Eir Garcia Silva and includes seven other state and regional organizations and Dairy Management, Inc. The goal is to start piloting the website by the end of the first quarter in 2021.



[Back to top](#)

Cheese board consumer campaign

This past fall, Midwest Dairy engaged 8 social media influencers around fun, creative ways to enjoy cheese at home.

Throughout September, October and September, we leveraged the trend of sharing beautiful cheese boards with the themes of fall, Halloween, and sports. The cheese boards were designed to highlight the fact that dairy not only plays an important role in wellness, but also brings comfort.

Influencers tagged Midwest Dairy and called out #cheese, #supportlocal, #NourishingWhatsNext, and #UndeniablyDairy as hashtags. Through these shareable boards, we were able to show different usage occasions, even while still at home, to promote the benefits of dairy and drive engagement with our target audience of millennial parents.

Key messages were:

- *Cheese boards can make nutritious food engaging and fun.*
- *Cheese boards are a great way to get the family involved in food preparation.*
- *Cheese boards offer an exciting new option at a time of increasing snack time monotony.*
- *You don't have to be a foodie to create or enjoy a cheese board.*
- *Cheese boards are a fun way to celebrate all your favorite fall themes.*
- *Cheese boards are a creative way to showcase local cheese and support farmers in your community.*

The 8 influencers had a range of cultural backgrounds with followers in Chicago, St. Louis, and Minneapolis. They shared a mix of static and video content on Instagram and Facebook. Select content was amplified with paid support, extending our reach and visibility to millennial parents.

Results were as follows:

- Total impressions (paid & organic): 4.01 million. **Exceeded goal by 44%.**
- Total reach: 4.42 million. **Exceeded goal by 4 million.**
- **Total engagements: 47,150/1.6%**
- Influencers engaged: 8
- **Number of content pieces: 69**

Several farmers also supported the campaign with their own cheese boards. Facebook posts from Hildebrand Farms (Missouri), Mil-R-Mor Farm (Illinois), and Borst Family Farms (Minnesota), among others, were boosted with paid support, resulting in an additional 662,000 total impressions and 62,000 total engagements.



[Back to top](#)

Dairy checkoff pursues partnership with Mayo Clinic

Dairy Management Inc. (DMI), in cooperation with Midwest Dairy, is pursuing a partnership with the world-renowned Mayo Clinic, headquartered in Rochester, Minnesota. In addition to patient care, the Mayo Clinic conducts research to increase the understanding of disease processes, best clinical practices, and translation of findings from the laboratory to the clinical practice.



The DMI/Mayo Clinic project starts with nutrition research. Currently, high-level, cross-functional discussions with Mayo Clinic's Cardiovascular Research Center, Development Department, and Foundation are occurring to assess a long-term, strategic partnership with DMI, in coordination Midwest Dairy. The partnership goals will be to engage in scientific research, outreach and education, and health and wellness pilots that are aligned with the national strategy.

This partnership follows a research model established in 2017 with Joslin Diabetes Center, an affiliate of the Harvard Medical School.

[Back to top](#)

Research uncovers new opportunities for lactose

Lactose is the second most abundant component in milk and yet the most underutilized dairy ingredient due to its oversupply in the dairy industry. Currently, lactose is largely used in infant foods and confectionery applications.

The conversion of lactose in the permeate into new value-added food ingredients such as sweeteners has become a research priority as this will increase opportunities for lactose utilization. Dr. Sergio Martinez-Monteagudo's team at South Dakota State University, developed a two-step process to convert lactose into a novel sweetening syrup made of glucose, galactose, fructose, and tagatose.

Why Tagatose?

The sweetness strength of tagatose is 90% of that of sucrose. In addition, the caloric value of tagatose is half of that of sucrose which makes tagatose an ideal sweetener. Due to its poor solubility and lower sweetness value, lactose itself is not commonly preferred as a sweetener. However, converting lactose into a sweetening syrup containing tagatose will uncover more opportunities for lactose conversion products as sweeteners in several applications.

[Back to top](#)



Midwest Dairy partners with Pizza Ranch to launch breakfast pizzas

Midwest Dairy is once again partnering with Pizza Ranch to launch a new offering: take-and-bake breakfast pizzas. Beginning in December, 3 varieties of breakfast pizza will be available: sausage and gravy; bacon and sausage; and sausage, peppers, and onions.

During the month of December, you can order a frozen, take-and-bake breakfast pizza for \$7.99 each and get a second one free.

Midwest Dairy has connected farmyard friends, Iowa Egg Council and Iowa Pork Producers Association, to help promote the new products for the year-long efforts.

Marketing efforts will include digital advertising, email blasts, box toppers, and social media.



[Back to top](#)

Fueling dairy's success through e-commerce channels

The latest episode of Midwest Dairy's Dairy on the Air podcast – [Fueling dairy's success through e-commerce channels](#) – features an in-depth discussion with Paul Ziemnisky, executive vice president of Global Innovation Partnerships at Dairy Management Inc. (DMI). Ziemnisky shares his insights on the dairy industry's growing relationship with Amazon and what this means for dairy now that more consumers are grocery shopping online due to the pandemic.

In a conversation with host Andy Vance, Ziemnisky discusses the beginnings of DMI's relationship with Amazon, which started in early 2019 when DMI reached out to learn more about Amazon's foray into the fresh food and beverage scene. Ziemnisky also shares how his team partnered with Amazon's leadership to help tell dairy's story in the digital space, giving Amazon a "Dairy 101" lesson on merchandising best practices, using facts to build credibility and showcase the power of real dairy. Ziemnisky says the future is bright for the dairy community, especially with the exciting opportunity to have the second-largest company in the world share dairy's story, connecting consumers with the sustainable farm to table journey.

Ziemnisky also discusses the timing of this relationship, and how there has been an acceleration of e-commerce over the past several months due to the COVID-19 pandemic with 54% of households now ordering groceries online and noting that once consumers start shopping online, they rarely stop.

This Dairy on the Air episode, and others, can be downloaded 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.

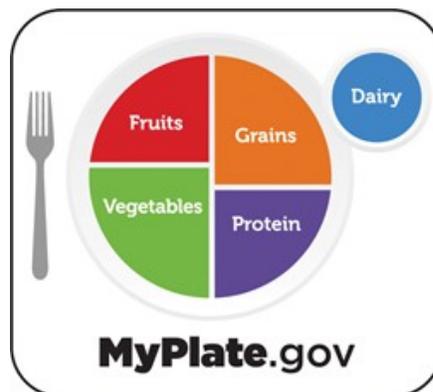


[Back to top](#)

Updated dietary guidelines released

On December 29, 2020, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (DGA) and updated the [MyPlate website](#).

The recommendations in the policy document largely echo the findings from the [2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's \(DGAC\) Scientific Report](#) released in July. Many of the recommendations for dairy, including the recommendation that Americans ages 9 and older consume 3 servings as part of the Healthy U.S.-Style Dietary Pattern, are consistent with previous DGA editions.



Dairy Highlights

- **Dairy is its own food group.** The 2020-2025 DGA continues to classify **dairy as its own food group in the three recommended dietary patterns for Americans over the age of two.**
 - The dairy group includes low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt as well as lactose-free versions and fortified soy beverage and soy yogurt – but no other plant-based alternatives.
- **Three servings stays.** The 2020-2025 DGA recommends **three servings of dairy foods** in the 2,000-calorie Healthy U.S.-Style and Healthy Vegetarian Dietary Patterns for those 9 years and older, 2.5 servings for those 3 to 8 years of age, 2 servings for those 2 years of age, 1.5 to 2 servings for toddlers 12 to 23 months who no longer consume human milk and small amounts of yogurt and cheese for infants 6 to 12 months, depending on developmental readiness.
- **Dairy recognized for contributing to healthy dietary patterns.** The DGA's recommended dietary patterns, **which include low-fat and non-fat dairy foods for Americans over the age of 2**, are developed to promote health, reduce risk of chronic disease and meet nutrient needs.
 - **The three dietary patterns in the 2020-2025 DGA** are the same as those from the 2015-2020 DGA: Healthy U.S.-Style Pattern, Healthy Vegetarian Pattern and Healthy Mediterranean-Style Pattern.
 - New dietary patterns for toddlers 12-23 months who no longer consume human milk include whole milk, reduced-fat plain yogurt and reduced-fat cheese.
- **Dairy contributes key nutrients.** Calcium, potassium, dietary fiber, and vitamin D are considered dietary components of public health concern for the general U.S. population because low intakes are associated with health concerns. The DGA states that "individuals should be encouraged to make shifts to increase the intake of vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains,

and dairy to move intakes of these under consumed dietary components closer to recommendations.”

- **Dairy supports child nutrition.** Nutrient-rich dairy foods are recommended for children under the age of 2, who are at a crucial period of growth and development. The 2020 DGA:
 - Advises providing yogurt and cheese as complementary foods beginning at around 6 months of age.
 - Recommends Healthy U.S.-Style and Health Vegetarian Dietary Patterns for toddlers (12-23 months of age) who no longer consume human milk. These dietary patterns include 1.5 to 2 daily servings of dairy foods (i.e., whole milk, reduced-fat plain yogurt, reduced-fat cheese).
 - Recommends avoiding foods and beverages with added sugars and limiting foods and beverages higher in sodium from birth through 23 months. For children age 12 through 23 months, the 2020-2025 DGA recommends against providing flavored milk, because it may contain added sugars.
- **No change to saturated fat recommendations.** The 2020-2025 DGA maintains its recommendation from the 2015-2020 DGA to limit saturated fat intake to no more than 10% of total calories for Americans 2 years and older.
- **No change to the added sugars recommendation.** The 2020-2025 DGA maintains the recommendation to limit daily added sugars intake to less than 10% of total calories. The 2020 DGAC report released in July recommended a lower limit on added sugars. Retaining the 10% limit allows Americans to have greater flexibility in food choices over time.

New Consumer Messaging

- The theme of the 2020 DGA is “Make Every Bite Count.” While the DGA is intended for use by health professionals and policy makers, MyPlate and its messaging are designed with consumers in mind. The MyPlate website has been refreshed to reflect the new guidelines.
- This thematic is enhanced through a “Start Simple with MyPlate” educational campaign, which offers the public advice and tips for applying the DGA recommendations to their daily lives. This includes a “[Start Simple with MyPlate](#)” app and several educational [resources](#).
- The DGA are based on four primary guidelines:
 - Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage.
 - Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to reflect personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations.
 - Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages within calorie limits.
 - Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages.

[Back to top](#)

MidwestDairy.com