



Minnesota Milk Meets as D.C. Shut Down

The Minnesota Milk Executive Committee saw an unfamiliar side of Washington: an emptying one. Minnesota Milk farmer board members Dave Buck, Shelly DePestel, Bob Dombeck, Rick Smith, as well as executive director Lucas Sjostrom, got to see it firsthand when they visited March 10-11. Offices were taking meetings with just 12-hour notice, lines were absent and there was no wait for restaurant service.

The fly-in, coordinated in conjunction with a National Milk Producers Federation fly-in, allowed the team to visit five House and two Senate offices. The group fought for and thanked offices for their support on Whole Milk in Schools, Production History Updates in Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC), standing up for the Identity of Milk, and providing dairy farmers access to labor through an Ag Jobs

bill called the Farm Workforce Modernization Act. They also talked about the pending issue, COVID-19, healthcare and rural Minnesota vitality.

The DMC Production History Update was pushed by Minnesota Milk and supported by Ag Committee Chair Collin Peterson and Rep. Tom Emmer, was included in one draft of the Phase III COVID-19 package, but eventually negotiated out. We do hope it will be included in the Phase IV COVID-19 package.

Rick Smith, Shelly DePestel, Dave Buck and Bob Dombeck at the U.S. Capitol during a recent visit to Washington D.C.





Minnesota Milk's 2019-2020 Board of Directors

Front (L to R):

Bob Dombek, Marianne Peterson, Shelly DePestel, Dave Buck, Tom Sedgeman.

Back (L to R):

Rod Schulze, Ron Miller, Garrett Luthens, Aaron Vogt, Rick Smith, Paul Daley.

All Directors and their contact information are published at MnMilk.org.



Minnesota Milk Producers Association
MnMilk.org • (877) 577-0741

Lucas Sjostrom
Executive Director
lucas@mnmilk.org

Shannon Seifert
Membership Director
shannon@mnmilk.org

Jenna Davis
Education Director
jenna@mnmilk.org

Morgan Krause
Program Assistant
krause.morgan@mnmilk.org

Alexandra Larson
Marketing Communications
larson.alex@mnmilk.org

The Cows are Out

By Dave Buck, President

Most of us in our dairy farming career at some point have been jolted into action by someone announcing that the cows are out. Everyone pretty much drops whatever they're doing and rushes to get them back in. After that is accomplished the search is on to determine how they got out. Gate left open, fence in poor condition or maybe a storm blew down a tree on the fence? Protocols are reviewed or fences are repaired and then life goes on.

With the current COVID-19 situation it feels as if the whole world is screaming "the cows are out". MN Milk has been working diligently to mitigate any potential problems that might arise. We have been in contact with state and federal lawmakers to help decide on the best plan of



Dave Buck
President

action. Coincidentally the Executive Board and Lucas were in Washington D.C. meeting with our representatives and senators on dairy issues as the virus was becoming a major issue. Much like having fences in good repair, having a good relationship with our lawmakers is very, very valuable as we move forward.

Everyone, please implement practices that will help keep you and everyone around you healthy. We will get through this.

Bozic Dairy Outlook Webinar draws 400+

By Marin Bozic, University of Minnesota

Minnesota Milk, in partnership with I-29 Moo University Extension, hosted a Dairy Situation Outlook Webinar on March 26. See the recording at <https://www.mnmilk.org/events/workshops-and-webinars/>.

Over 550 people registered and over 425 attended the webinar, which lasted

about 1.5 hours covering topics related to markets, risk management and COVID-19.

Poll results during the webinar showed that 95% attendees expected effects from COVID-19:

- 65% feared milk prices crash
- 19% feared a local dairy plant would cease operation
- 10% feared losing employees
- 5% expected little effect

Feedback from attendees included:

- "Thank you – it was time well spent."
- "This was great today, thanks for having this!"
- "I learned a lot, thank you!"

If you have future webinar topic ideas, please contact jenna@mnmilk.org.



Marin Bozic
- University of Minnesota
- Minnesota Milk
Contract Economist

Dairy Day 2020 Sees Record Legislator Participation

As this is written in late March, it is hard to tell what will come of the legislature. But Minnesota Milk made an impact with 60 farmers attending about 60 meetings with legislators throughout the day at the 2020 Dairy Day at the Capitol on February 18.

In addition to the meetings throughout the day, Minnesota Milk saw about 60 legislators at their afternoon reception, which was held next to the Southern Minnesota Sugarbeet Cooperative and on the legislators' route to the annual Farm Bureau meeting of County Presidents. The collaboration allowed for maximum formal meetings during the day, and informal discussions in the afternoon.

Dairy Day at the Capitol also included a press conference to highlight the Milk and Water First at Kids Meals bill, to ensure restaurants serve milk and water before other drinks. Minnesota Milk teamed with many health organizations on the issue pushed by Sen. Karla Bigham (D-Cottage Grove) and Rep. Jeff Brand (D-St. Peter). The bill had initial momentum but is not expected to pass in 2020.



Minnesota Milk President Dave Buck (left), Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, and Minnesota Milk Director Ron Miller discuss Section 179 as a benefit to dairy farmers.



Minnesota Milk member Janet Bremer, Hastings, takes the podium to push for Milk and Water First at Kids Meals during a Dairy Day at the Capitol Press conference, flanked by legislators and many from the healthcare industry. Bill author Karla Bigham is at the right of the podium, with Rep. Jeff Brand and Sen. Dan Sparks behind Janet.



Minnesota Milk members Andrew Patnode, Corcoran, and John Scherber, Rogers, finished a meeting with Senator David Osmeck.

Staff Announcements



Alex Larson and her husband Reid welcomed a baby boy, Theo James, on December 20, 2019.



Lucas Sjostrom and his wife Alise welcomed a baby boy, Conan Herbert, on February 12, 2020.

A GRASSROOTS COOPERATIVE SINCE 1921

First District Association is proudly owned by over 700 family farms located across Minnesota and Wisconsin. We have a long standing history of producing high quality dairy products that return a strong, competitive price and unprecedented earnings to our member owners. We are currently expanding our state-of-the-art processing facility and are actively procuring milk. If you would like to learn more about our Cooperative, please reach out to us at 320-593-4223.

Learn more about us at www.firstdistrict.com or find us on Facebook.



Dairy Management Workshop Recap

In early January, we were pleased to partner with I-29 Moo University, a collaboration of dairy extension professionals from MN, SD, ND, IA, and NE. In Perham and Pipestone, our joint program reached over 50 attendees. Speakers included: Dr. Jennifer Van Os, University of Wisconsin, and Dr. Pat Gorden, Iowa State University, and Jennifer Bentley, Iowa State University. Dr. Van Os focused on why animal welfare is important for both a farmer and consumer perspective; she also discussed calf housing options. Similarly, Dr. Gorden focused on FARM 4.0 and how it relates to pain management in calves.

In early March, Minnesota Milk partnered with UMDIA and Midwest Dairy to provide outreach to participants in St. Cloud, Rochester and Hutchinson. Throughout the week, our joint collaboration reached over 155 farmers and industry partners. Speakers at all three locations included: Joe Armstrong, University of Minnesota Extension, who provided expertise regarding lifetime performance and vaccine protocols, and Dan Peerless, Dairy Management Inc., who provided insights on greenhouse gasses and the dairy industry.



Dr. Jennifer Van Os shares her expertise of animal welfare with workshop participants in Perham.



Joe Armstrong, DVM, provided sample protocols for vaccinations, which will allow farmers to save money and time – as well as stress on their cattle.

PortaCheck On-Farm Testing Solutions

PortaCheck products are ideal for monitoring milk quality and animal health. Use them to:

- Test problem cows or quarters on-farm.
- Check cows at freshening and dry-off.
- Monitor response to treatment.
- Check animals prior to purchase and insemination.
- Monitor passive transfer of IgG in calves.



BHBCheck™ Plus



PortaBHB®



IgGCheck™



PortaSCC®



UdderCheck™

PortaCheck, Inc.



Contact us today for all your on-farm testing needs!

NELSON and **JAMESON**
INC.

1-800-826-8302 • nelsonjameson.com • sales@nelsonjameson.com

2020 Legislative Update

By Daryn McBeth, Lathrop GPM

The Minnesota Legislature finished the “normal” part of the legislative session on March 17 as COVID-19 was just starting to spread in Minnesota. That morning legislators passed \$200 million in COVID-19-related funding for hospitals and caregivers and then promptly adjourned.

When adjourning, legislative leaders expressed that they would remain in recess until April 14 unless they needed to reconvene to pass additional emergency measures addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. That’s exactly what happened March 26, as both the Minnesota House and Senate reconvened to pass an additional \$330 million in aid for COVID-19. The components of the aid largely followed Governor Walz’s supplemental budget request, and the funding focused exclusively on responding to COVID-19.

Some lawmakers and industry advocates were anxious to consider legislation and funding to help businesses and workers facing unemployment and significantly reduced or nonexistent sales. However, “economic stimulus” or “bailout” measures were not part of the package and are expected to receive consideration in the weeks ahead.

What the remaining 2020 legislative session looks like is anyone’s guess. Likely, the Legislature and Governor will try to come to terms on financial assistance for Minnesota’s ailing economy due to COVID-19. This is becoming the top priority after health preparedness and treatment needs are met first. It is possible the legislature would then move to

policy matters and a bonding bill, if they are able to meet in person in a session and if COVID-19 subsides. As part of yesterday’s session and voting, both the House and Senate took extreme measures to keep six feet apart and abide by social distancing recommendations. They also changed their rules to allow for remote voting, as some legislatures were unable to be at the Capitol.

Minnesota Milk continues to advocate for our legislative priorities including conforming Section 179 and expanding the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit, but with all that is going with the COVID-19 pandemic we must acknowledge that lawmakers will focus on addressing that first.

The Legislature’s current recess is scheduled to extend at least until April 14, but leaders have said they will reconvene sooner if they agree on new measures. Ultimately, the Constitution requires adjournment of the regular session on May 18, whereupon the Governor must call a Special Session for the Legislature to reconvene later in the year. All parties have acknowledged a willingness, even a likelihood, to reconvene in one or more Special Sessions in order to pass needed legislation this year.



Lobbyist Daryn McBeth
Lathrop GPM

Resources and Updates via COVID-19 Response

Taxes – Federal tax deadlines have been extended to July 15, 2020. This also extends dates for 2019 IRA contributions to July 15. If expecting a refund, those will still be processed as soon as possible. Visit [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) for more information.

Minnesota also extended deadlines to July 15, but not for business taxes. Decisions on the May 15 Property Tax deadline are pending. Visit <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/> for more information.

Unemployment - If your business is affected by unemployment, laid off employees can visit www.uimn.org. The Phase III CARES Act will add \$600 per week up to four months for anyone who is unemployed, on top of state benefits.

Grants/Loans – MN DEED created an emergency loan program of up to \$35,000 at 0% interest, with up to 50% forgivable. Learn more at www.mn.gov/deed.

Federal Legislation – CARES Act (Phase III)

- *\$1,200 per person up to AGI of \$75,000, plus \$500 per child*
- *\$24 billion for USDA, including \$9.5 billion for USDA Secretary to use to their discretion – dairy will push for some of this to come to our industry*
- *Businesses that take a 50% loss compared to the same quarter last year will be eligible for up to a 50% wages tax credit, up to \$5,000 per worker*
- *Employers that use this tax credit are not eligible for special SBA loans*
- *Defer 6.2% tax on wages used to fund social security*

Up-to-date information will be available at <https://www.mnmilk.org/covid-19>.

Minnesota Milk Featured Member Farm: Hartung Hog and Dairy, Randy and Amanda Hartung, Freeport MN

Tell us about your family and farm

My husband Randy and I have been farming for 22 years on his grandparents' farm near Freeport. We milk 76 cows, raise our own heifers and steers, and grow corn, beans, and alfalfa on about 600 acres. We have four kids: Trevin, 19, goes to Alex Tech for welding; Abraham, 16, attends Albany High school; Ethan, 11, a 5th grader at Holy Family School; and Marissa, 9, and a 3rd grader at Holy Family. We are proud at how great we all work together as a team to get everything done.

How long have you been Minnesota Milk Members?

We have been Minnesota Milk members for three years. We signed up to be a part of the continuing education that the dairy expo offers. Since then, I have had the opportunity to be on the policy committee and the membership committee.

Why Minnesota Milk?

I think it is important to be involved so that our small dairy has a voice in how our laws are made and how we are represented. Minnesota Milk has been a voice for us through these challenging times and has done a great job of letting the right people know how important we are to our local infrastructure and economy. Our experience with the Minnesota Milk team has been good. Everyone is always willing to lend an ear and hear our concerns.

What is your favorite Minnesota Milk Event?

Our favorite event that we attend is the expo. We try to get there when we can and always come home with something new that we learned every time. I have also gone to Dairy

Day at the Capital for the last two years and found it very rewarding to be able to talk to our representatives and senators. I feel that they truly seem interested in what we are doing and to me it makes them real people.

Why should dairy farmers get involved with Minnesota Milk?

It is very important for the world to hear our real dairy farmer voice; to get the real story about dairy out there for others to hear. The personal connection to the dairy farm makes our stories authentic. When I became involved in the policy committee, it was a great refresher on how our government works and how laws are made.



(L to R) Randy, Amanda, Abraham, Trevin, Marissa, and Ethan Hartung live near Freeport, MN on their century farm.

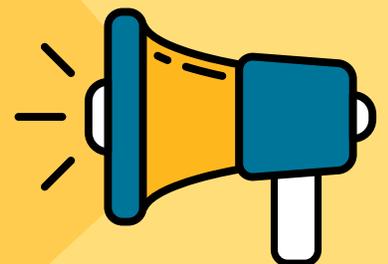
New Member Benefit: Scriptcost™ Cards

We are excited to offer a new membership benefit to all Minnesota Milk members – prescription discount cards for use, especially for farmers or employees who have high-deductible health insurance or no health insurance. If you have insurance, the Scriptcost™ card can still be used to ensure you have the lowest price available.

Walmart teamed up with Minnesota Milk to offer these cards at no cost, providing discounts of

10% and 65% on your prescriptions, varying by pharmacy and medication. Scriptcost™ cards are accepted at Walmart and other participating pharmacies, including Cash Wise, Coborn's, CVS, Hy-Vee, Thrifty White, Walgreens and more.

We have begun by sending out one card per 40 cows, but are happy to get you more at your request. Learn more about the Scriptcost™ cards visit mnmilk.org/news-room/news.





Minnesota Milk Producers Association
2015 Rice Street | St. Paul, MN 55113
(763) 355-9697 | mmpa@MnMilk.org
MnMilk.org

Inside this Issue

- *New Member Benefits*
- *Dairy Day at the Capitol & D.C. Fly-in*
- *2020 Legislative Update*
- *MMPA Farm Profile*

COVID-19 Resources

We are certainly facing unsettling times. Despite the unknowns of the future due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's more important than ever to check in with your family, employees, friends, and neighbors. We're all in this together, and together, as one, we'll overcome this pandemic.

For dairy specific resources, visit www.mnmilk.org/covid-19 for up-to-date information.

Farm Stress Resources

Farming can be a stressful occupation. There are people and organizations ready to help. Visit www.mnfarmstress.com or call the Minnesota Farm and Rural Helpline at **1-833-600-2670**.

- *Help with Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Feeling Stuck, and Crisis Situations*
- *Help with Daily Living*
- *Business, Financial and Legal Help*

