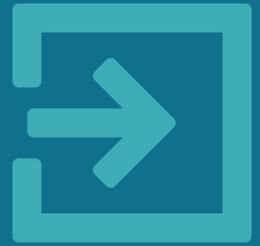




# insider



Quarterly Newsletter for Members of Minnesota Milk • Also available online at [MnMilk.org](http://MnMilk.org) • Spring 2022



*Pictured (L to R):  
Ron Miller,  
Shelly DePestel,  
Bob Dombeck,  
Rick Smith, and  
Lucas Sjostrom.*



## Minnesota Milk's 2021-2022 Board of Directors

Front (L to R):  
Ron Miller, Anthony Anderson,  
Rick Smith, Sadie Frericks,  
Shelly DePestel, Bob Dombeck,  
Dave Buck, Garret Luthens,  
and Aaron Vogt.

All Directors and their contact information are published at [MnMilk.org](http://MnMilk.org).



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[lucas@mnmilk.org](mailto:lucas@mnmilk.org)

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## From the President

I hope everyone is winding down the season of mud and meetings. It's great to have many of the in-person events we have missed out on in the last couple of years behind us and looking forward to pastures and plantings.

A team of us headed to Washington, D.C., in early April for a couple of days of important hill visits. It is important to start laying the groundwork for the 2023 Farm Bill. Making that connection with our legislators is always impactful and they need to know what is important for Minnesota Dairy Farmers.

Meetings were held with National Milk Producers Federation, American Farm Bureau Federation, our Minnesota delegation of Senators and House Members, along with House Ag Committee and Senate Ag Committee staff members. Teaming up with those who are supportive of dairy issues will ensure that we have a strong voice when it comes to getting the details right in the farm bill.

We got out of D.C. this time without the country shutting down and no blizzards.

I hope everyone enjoys a safe planting season.

Sincerely,

Shelly DePestel  
President, Minnesota Milk



**Shelly DePestel**  
President

Minnesota Milk **minute**



Stay up to date on the latest state and national news with the weekly Minnesota Milk Minute. Scan to subscribe now!



# JOIN US for an *EXCITING* EVENT!

Register @  
**MnMilk.org**

WEDNESDAY  
July 13

WEDNESDAY  
August 10



Double the fun at this year's Minnesota Milk Cup. We're returning to two beautiful courses for fun and fellowship on the fairways. Registration fee for Minnesota Milk Cup Golf Scramble is \$150/person or \$600 per four-person team, and includes green fees, cart, lunch, and dinner. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m and lunch at 11:00 a.m. with golfers teeing off at 12:00 p.m. The event supports Minnesota Milk's scholarship fund and other activities.

## LOCATION

### MOUNT FRONTENAC GOLF COURSE

32420 Ski Rd, Frontenac, MN 55026

### LYNX NATIONAL GOLF COURSE

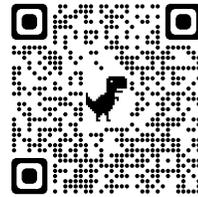
40204 Primrose Ln, Sauk Centre, MN 56378



*Event is held rain or shine.  
No refunds due to weather.*

## SCHEDULE (all events)

- 10:30 a.m. Registration
- 11:00 a.m. Lunch
- 12:00 p.m. Shotgun start
- 5:30 p.m. Social
- 6:00 p.m. Awards and dinner



Scan the QR code

## REGISTRATION

**\$150/PERSON or \$600/FOURSOME or \$50/NON-GOLFER**

### FEE INCLUDES:

- > 18 holes of golf, cart, and driving range
- > Lunch, social hour and dinner
- > Contests for men and women
- > Drawings for prizes

(DETACH HERE)

## WAYS TO REGISTER:

ONLINE:  
**MnMilk.org**

### MAIL THIS FORM & PAYMENT TO:

**Minnesota Milk Producers  
Association**

Minnesota Milk Cup  
2015 Rice Street  
St. Paul, MN 55113

Team Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Check location:  Frontenac  Sauk Centre  Both, Total x2

Golfer 1: \_\_\_\_\_ \$150

Golfer 2: \_\_\_\_\_ \$150

Golfer 3: \_\_\_\_\_ \$150

Golfer 4: \_\_\_\_\_ \$150

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



1



2



3



**1. The Minnesota Milk team after a productive meeting with Senator Tina Smith (second from left).**

**2. Our productive meeting with Minnesota senator Tina Smith.**

**3. Rep. Tom Emmer's staff, Ryan Altman and Dorothy Clark, meeting with Minnesota Milk's Rick Smith, Shelly DePestel, and Bob Dombeck.**



**4. Minnesota Milk board members with Land o' Lakes CEO Beth Ford (center).**

**5. In conversation with Land o' Lakes CEO Beth Ford.**

**6. Minnesota Milk board members (left to right) Ron Miller, Shelly DePestel, Bob Dombeck, Rick Smith; Minnesota Milk Executive Director Lucas Sjostrom.**



Bryan B.  
Lake Wilson, MN

JOIN  
US

Whether it's in your community or at the Capitol, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association is the essential advocate for corn farmers.

**We're stronger *with you.***

## Sustainability FAQ's with Dr. Erin Cortus

### *Why is dairy under the spotlight for greenhouse gas reductions?*

It is no secret that dairy cows and other ruminants produce methane, one of the greenhouse gases. Methane production is a natural part of digestion in ruminants, and stored manure is another major source on a dairy farm. Across the world, the UN FAO estimates 14.5% of greenhouse gas emissions are linked to livestock<sup>1</sup>. Within the U.S., dairy's contribution by enteric fermentation and manure storage to the U.S.'s greenhouse gas emissions were approximately 1.2% in 2019<sup>2</sup>. Both numbers are important, but context obviously matters!

Other industries are feeling pressure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions too. Dairy, and agriculture in general, provides natural resources to many products – making dairy part of many supply chains. As 94% of dairy farms are family-owned, this makes any spotlight on dairy feel personal.

### *Does every farm need to be net zero? Do I need to change my practices?*

The Net Zero Initiative by U.S. Dairy is a collective agreement, with the vision to make dairy the environmental solution. Net zero greenhouse gas emissions is only one of the priorities of this initiative. Water use and water quality improvements are additional priorities in the NZI. We do not want to change practices to reduce one impact without consideration of other impacts.

Before making any change, the first step is to simply understand your baseline conditions. There is more value to making a change if you know: (1) what your metric is for current practices; (2) how a change in practice will influence one or more metrics; and (3) how this metric demonstrates progress towards a goal. A baseline calculation, such as that provided in a FARM Environmental Stewardship (ES) assessment, shows what elements of dairy production are included – and not included – in estimates of greenhouse gas production and energy use.

### *What if I try something and it doesn't work? – for the environment, for my finances, or for my sanity?*

Consider participation in the Net Zero Initiative, or your farm's own set of environmental stewardship goals, a road trip. The priorities related to a goal (i.e. reduced greenhouse gas emissions or improved water management) may have some initial routes mapped out to try. But as far as road trips go, there can be road closures, detours, or new opportunities that come along. It is fair to say this is a time of opportunity and risk.

Dairy production and farming practices are very regional and variable because of number of cows, weather, local and/or

state policies, and sometimes, simply history. Some practices are transferable, others are not. Some practices take time and patience to establish before benefits are visible. Building soil carbon is a great example.

While trying a new practice may seem too risky at present, there are still opportunities to stay informed and support others. There are groups that are doing some experimentation on behalf of other farmers. Two local efforts include the Headwaters Agriculture Sustainability Partnership program and Farmers for Sustainable Food.

### *My farm is a century farm – that seems to exemplify sustainability. How do you define sustainability?*

Sustainability, in the broadest sense, is about maintaining something into the future. Commonly, sustainability definitions promote economic, ethical, and environmental aspects in decision-making. Making it day to day, weathering ups and downs from forces (often) out of our control demonstrates resiliency. Resiliency cannot be overlooked. However, there needs to be a vision for what that future looks like. Sustainability goals are personal, to individuals, organizations, industries, and even government entities. Goals may be set with the perspective of global or local impacts.

Many dairy farms have deep roots. This is something to be proud of. However, that legacy undoubtedly resulted from evolution in practices – driven by innovation, goals, economics or perhaps family circumstances. Consider sustainable development as longer-term initiatives, with goals designed toward the next generation of dairy production. As an example, the NZI is a vision for 2050. Attaining the NZI goals will not happen overnight. At farm and industry level, it will take strategic planning. Baselines and metrics mentioned earlier, provide some tangible proof that these long-term changes are, in fact, taking place.



**Erin Cortus**

*Associate Professor and  
Extension Engineer,  
Bioproducts and  
Biosystems Engineering,  
University of Minnesota*

## Legislative Update

By Daryn McBeth, Contract lobbyist, Lathrop GPM

Happy Spring! Here we are in the middle of the 2022 Minnesota Legislative Session that began on January 31 and is Constitutionally bound to adjourn on May 23, 2022.

This second year of the biennium, Minnesota's 201 legislators have focused mostly on the state budget's unprecedented \$9.3 billion surplus. This has made the session far more like a "budget year" than a "bonding year." Typically in even-numbered years the State Legislature focuses more on policy/non-fiscal matters and passing a bonding bill that funds capital investments and maintenance for the state's public infrastructure. The Legislature had "finished" setting the 2-year budget for the state last year.... But while a bonding bill is in the works this session, the allure of spending some of the "one-time" mega surplus available has garnered the most attention and committee time – making the 2022 Session seem more like a budget year (again).

The other backdrop of the 2022 Session is that November will bring the General Election with all 67 Senate Districts and 134 House Districts facing re-election, along with the statewide race for Governor. The 2020 Census came to a conclusion and has brought newly redrawn Congressional and Legislative districts for the state, where many State Legislative incumbents have found themselves no longer living in their old district and/or being matched up for re-election against other incumbents. Majority party control of the House and Senate are both up for grabs in the General Election. The current margins are 36-31 in the GOP-controlled Senate (including 2 Independents caucusing with the GOP majority) and 69-59 in the DFL-controlled House, making Minnesota one of the only divided legislatures in the country.

Minnesota Milk is still coming off of a huge political win by securing \$8 million in 2019 for so-called "DAIRI" (Dairy Assistance, Investment, and Relief Initiative) payments to individual dairy farmers who chose to participate in the Federal government's Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program. Producers who enrolled in the program received a payment from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture based on 10 cents per hundredweight (cwt.) of 2018 production, capped at 50,000 cwt. The program was designed to stem

declining dairy farm numbers seen in 2018 and to encourage participation in a newly re-tooled DMC risk management program. It was one of the first times the State Legislature stepped in to assist a specific agriculture sector with meaningful cash resources and basically no strings attached. We accomplished this because of dairy farmer advocates like you!

While the dairy economy has recovered somewhat from 2018-19 milk prices, thanks in part to DAIRI assistance and other Federal government risk management programs, Minnesota Milk remains focused on working with policy makers to enact other policies that keep dairy farming competitive and part of Minnesota's heritage. Those priorities this Session include enhancements to tax policies and credits, feed and forage cost offsets due to the historic 2021 drought, supplementing testing infrastructure and research with the state's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and University of Minnesota, rewarding or incenting environmental stewardship and dairy practices that address climate change, and overall opposing additional regulations that increase costs of dairy farming without benefitting the environment.

Part of how Minnesota Milk accomplishes success with these priorities relies on engagement from you – dairy farmers and industry stakeholders. Your engagement can happen in several ways including by informing yourself of specific policies and priorities and by reviewing Minnesota Milk's website and resolutions, and by reading the weekly Minnesota Milk Minute sent by email every Friday. Additionally, armed with this information, you are encouraged to contact your State Legislators and help the Minnesota Milk staff and yours truly, by advocating for these priorities. An even more specific way to engage is to commit your time to attending the Dairy Day at the Capitol event Minnesota Milk holds each year in St. Paul.

Despite some logistical challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic, the State Capitol complex is "open for business" this year and participants in the 2022 Dairy Day at the Capitol event will see this first hand. While the State Office Building where all 201 House members have their offices is only partially open, the Minnesota Senate Building and Capitol are fully open for face-to-



Contract lobbyist  
Daryn McBeth  
Lathrop GPM

face meetings with House and Senate members and staff.

The Day at the Capitol will culminate in Minnesota Milk's traditional reception at the hotel across from the Capitol, formerly known as the Kelly Inn (now owned by Radisson). Many legislators, commissioners, and staff who work for legislators and relevant state agencies will be on hand for the reception to meet with dairy farmers and learn about Minnesota Milk priorities. As legislative districts are changing, and many rural legislative champions we have come to know have announced their plans to retire, Dairy Day at the Capitol is one of the best ways to interact with policymakers - who in many cases are not familiar with dairy farming. Please do your part and try to attend!

This Legislative Session there is a lot that is still up in the air, and it is fairly typical that things won't get finalized until the final days of the Session come to an end in May. Furthermore, unlike a typical budget year, with the \$9.3 billion in potential "supplemental" funding that is in play for tax cuts or programing/spending increases, the Legislature can adjourn on May 23 without passing anything and the surplus will carry forward to next year's Session. The voice of the dairy industry is an important one, and I encourage you to use that voice within Minnesota Milk leadership and state policymakers to ask for your priorities. Don't sit on the sidelines and be only a spectator – engage and participate!

*(Sustainability FAQ's continued from page 7)*

***The sustainability conversation seems dominated by groups and individuals with a low-level understanding of agriculture. How can I respectfully speak to them about my experience and challenges?***

These conversations may be hard, particularly when definitions of sustainability do not align because of perspective (global versus local), or different priorities (see above). However, simply joining or starting these conversations is an important first step.

It may seem like non-ag audiences are speaking another language. Recognize – they may feel the exact same way when farmers talk about their farm, animals, and practices. However, asking questions to understand commonalities and differences in vision, priorities and metrics help make these conversations a learning experience for all.

Having baseline calculations – from a FARM ES assessment for example - in your back pocket provides valuable talking points. These types of numbers demonstrate engagement by a farm, the impact of current practices, and guideposts for future actions.

*Dr. Cortus developed these answers with assistance from Baitong Chen, Post-Doctoral Research Associate.*

1. Gerber, P.J., Steinfeld, H., Henderson, B., Mottet, A., Opio, C., Dijkman, J., Falcucci, A. & Tempio, G. 2013. *Tackling climate change through livestock – A global assessment of emissions and mitigation opportunities.* Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome.
2. EPA Greenhouse Gas Inventory, 2019.

# SUSTAINING IS MORE THAN MAINTAINING.

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## Expanding an existing feedlot

### What to know about obtaining a NPDES or SDS permit

Keep the following items in mind if you are expanding your feedlot to an animal holding capacity that meets or exceeds 1,000 animal units (AU) or a federal [large concentrated animal feeding operation \(CAFO\) threshold](#).

#### Timetable for permits



Getting a NPDES or SDS permit takes time – at least 60 days but longer if...

- [Environmental review](#) is required (expect 4 - 6 months)
- Significant public interest or comments during the public notice period

Talking to neighbors, township, and county early in the process is recommended

- No one wants to be the last to know

#### Runoff controls



Feed storage areas need to have runoff controls (basin, tank, or infiltration area)

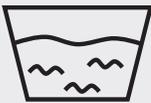
- Even if it is covered by plastic or is a bagged feed

Open lots need to have runoff controls (basin, tank, or infiltration area)

If existing components do not have runoff controls an individual permit will be required

- Permit typically requires installation of runoff controls within 2 - 3 years

#### Liquid manure storage



At least 9 months of liquid manure storage capacity required (if 1,000+ AU)

- A site-wide calculation – all animals and all storage areas

New liquid storage areas must have the following separation to karst bedrock:

- 1,000 or more AU – 40 ft for earthen liners, 15 ft for concrete liners
- 300 to 1,000 AU – 30 ft for earthen liners, 10 ft for concrete liners

#### Land application



No winter application of liquid manure

Restricted winter application of solid manure – low field slope and rain/melt potential

- No winter application of solid manure in March (NPDES permit only)

Cover crops required in September (NPDES permit only)

Choose 1 of 4 Nitrogen BMPs for applications October 1 – 14 (NPDES permit only)

#### Annual report and fees



Report of feedlot activities required every year on March 1

- Number of animals and self-reporting of issues at the feedlot (overflows, spills, etc.)
- Manure production and land application records

Fee to apply for the permit – based upon type of permit

Annual fee each year the feedlot is covered by a NPDES or SDS permit

Feedlot program staff contacts: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/mpca-feedlot-staff-contacts>.

More information on NPDES and SDS permits: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/npdes-and-sds-permits>.



**Minnesota Milk Producers Association**  
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(763) 355-9697 | [mmpa@MnMilk.org](mailto:mmpa@MnMilk.org)  
[MnMilk.org](http://MnMilk.org)

## Inside this Issue

- *Letter from the President*
- *D.C. Trip Recap*
- *Legislative Update*
- *FAQ with Dr. Erin Cortus*
- *MN Milk Cup Registration*

## Scholarships

Do you know a high school senior or college student looking for scholarships? Be sure to tell them about Minnesota Milk's Scholarship program. Minnesota Milk will award twelve \$1,000 scholarships this year. Applications are due June 1, 2022.

Apply now at:

<https://www.mnmilk.org/awards/scholarships/>

