

December 2023



**Message From Our
Executive Director,
Amy Winters**



December has always been my favorite month. Time with family and friends, the crisp cool air, snow, holiday food, beautiful lights, and festive music all make me feel especially happy and blessed. It's a time that feels like anything is

possible.

I especially love that December is a time when so many people think a lot more about others and find ways to help those that are struggling. Food insecurity, shelter, mental health, and loneliness all get more attention and support. So many wonderful stories come to light of giving and uplifting others.

2023 has been an exceptionally difficult year with many programs that provided additional food, health care and childcare during the pandemic coming to an end. The number of those that are not making ends meet continues to grow. Food pantry shelves are not always full and the need for additional resources is great. Both rural and urban areas are struggling; over 427,000 Wisconsinites are having a hard time getting enough food to meet their basic needs.

How can WDPA and our members help to make 2024 a better year for those that are struggling? What can we do throughout the year to make our communities stronger and healthier? How can we coordinate ways to get more dairy to those who are food insecure?

Wisconsin dairy processors are in a unique position to make milk and other dairy products more accessible. The need for refrigeration at food pantries, bulk milk dispensers at schools, and transportation of products are all opportunities. Milk is one of the most requested items of those facing hunger, and an important part of their nutrition.

In the next few weeks, we will be sending out a survey asking for stories of what your company has done or is doing to uplift your community and those in need. We want to share your stories and find the best ideas in dairy industry philanthropy. We want to help make it a focused effort by the industry statewide.

Thank you for all you do to bring nutritious and delicious dairy products to consumers and thank you for your involvement in WDPA. We appreciate you!

**Wishing you and your loved ones a safe
and joyous holiday season!**



Wisconsin Dairy Products Association WDPA Newsletter

Food Waste and Sustainability

WDPA participated in PDPW's 2023 Dairy Summit last month. The summit had a focus on food waste and sustainability; two issues that have a lot of merit on their own and even more so as part of a combined strategy for the dairy industry.

An estimated 40% of food produced in the United States is wasted. Wisconsin is ranked seventh highest in the country for food waste. We generate an estimated 615,000 tons of wasted food and 238,000 tons of food scraps. This 853,000 tons does not include food processing byproducts like dairy wastewater. The DNR estimates there is 200 million gallons of dairy byproducts going into landfills each year.

Of the 615,000 tons of food, it is estimated that 70% was still edible, 70 percent! Those statistics are sobering when 1 in 11 people across Wisconsin face hunger and there is a need to make our landfills more sustainable. It's an issue that is getting needed attention, and an issue that will take everyone in the food chain from producers to consumers to solve.

The United States discards more food than any other country in the world and milk is the 2nd highest most discarded item. There is a need for upstream solutions including revising best buy and use buy dates, educating consumers about the difference between food freshness and food safety. Research into ultra-pasteurization, smaller containers and finding new technology to create value added products from dairy by-products. are being discussed.

What are your thoughts? Send us an email at info@wdpa.net

Click Here to Watch a video about the need for dairy in food banks

Dairy is the most requested food at food pantries and many pantries struggle to provide enough according to Second Harvest, Feeding America, and many community food banks.

Wisconsin food banks are requesting donations of milk and other dairy products. If you have products to donate, call your local or regional pantries and make sure they have refrigeration and space.

Providing vouchers and coupons for milk at grocery stores is also an idea WDPA is exploring. Please email us at milkfund@wdpa.net to tell us how you have been able to help get dairy to those that are food insecure or how you are willing to help.





Under the Dome

Legislative Update

Senate Bill 431 - Transportation of Fluid Milk Products Including Whey

WDPA has been lobbying in support of this important measure that would allow milk haulers to haul all fluid milk products at the current 98,000 lbs on six axles that is allowed for liquid milk. The bill passed the Senate committee and the full senate last month and was sent to the state Assembly for action. The Assembly companion bill will be voted on this Thursday, December 7th and floor action is expected next week.

Senate Bill 271 – Commercial Driver Training Grants

This bill that creates a commercial driver training grant program to provide grants to groups or employers that provide training to individuals to obtain commercial driver's licenses, was passed by the state senate on November 14 and is expected, passed the Assembly Committee

Assembly Bill 655 – Transition to Grass Pilot Grant Program

AB 655 which passed the Assembly Agriculture Committee this week, provides grant funding up to \$40,000 for farmers implementing new grass based managed grazing areas on their farms. The grant would assist with establishing forages for rotational grazing, assistance to establish harvestable continuous cover to produce supplemental feed for grass fed livestock, provides incentive payments during first three years of transition to grass-based grazing, innovation, market development, and more.

Senate Bill 781 – Raw Milk

Senator Duey Strobel (R-Cedarburg) and Representative Elijah Behnke (R-Oconto) have introduced legislation that would allow a milk producer to receive a license from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to sell unpasteurized dairy products processed on farm premises to consumers. Under the bill, the sale of raw milk could be through delivery at retail stores or directly from a dairy farm.

The bill further specifies that a milk producer who has a license to sell unpasteurized dairy products is not required to obtain a milk producer license, a grade A permit, or a buttermaker or cheesemaker license if the milk producer does not send any milk to a dairy plant and sells no milk or milk products other than unpasteurized dairy products processed on farm premises. The bill was introduced on December 8th and referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Tourism.

Assembly Bill 349 - Limitations on Ownership of Agriculture or Forestry Land by Foreign Persons

This legislation would prohibit foreign owned companies or individuals from holding or owning agricultural land in Wisconsin that is over 50 acres; current law allows for 640 acres. While the bill is well intentioned it would prevent foreign owned dairy processors from purchasing land for land spreading wastewater, production agriculture, etc. It would also prevent foreign owned biotechnology companies and farm input/pesticide companies from doing field research which is required by EPA. We are working with the bill authors on an amendment to allow for these companies to own land for nutrient management and field research.



Real Dairy Labeling Bill

We are working with Representative Joy Goeben R-Hobart to introduce dairy labeling legislation. The bill draft specifies that no person may label a food product as, or sell or offer for sale, a food product that is labeled as, a type of dairy product, such as cream, yogurt, or cheese, unless the food product is a dairy product. Also, under the bill, no person may label a food product as, or sell or offer for sale a food product that is labeled as, a type of dairy ingredient unless the food product is derived from cow's milk, or hooved or camelid mammal's milk

- About one-quarter of consumers mistakenly think plant-based products that mimic cheese contain milk.
- About one-third of consumers think that plant-based imitation cheese contains protein, and 21 percent think that it is of a higher quality than dairy even though the imitations have little to no protein.
- About one-quarter of consumers purchase plant-based foods that mimic cheese because they believe them to be low in calories and fat and without additives. These plant-based foods contain an equal or comparable amount of fat and calories and substantially more additives than dairy cheeses.

Governor Evers Signed Farmland Preservation Reforms Into Law

Governor Evers signed Act 42 into law on December 6th. This new law expands farmland preservation agreements, decreases the minimum required length of agreements from 15 years to 10 years; and increases the amount of credit that may be claimed per eligible acre.

The new law also expands eligibility for farmland preservation tax credits to land that is subject to an agricultural conservation easement purchased by DATCP. Thank you to Shawn Pfaff from Dairy Business Association who worked tirelessly on this bill; he did an exceptional job.



WDPA Executive Director Amy Winters attending AB 133 bill signing at the capitol earlier this month.

Capitol Holiday Tree

The Wisconsin State Capitol Holiday Tree is absolutely beautiful! The 30 foot balsam was donated by Marge Van Heuklon from Rhinelander Wisconsin. Public and private schools from throughout the state handmade ornaments to decorate the tree; the ornaments celebrate 175 years of statehood. The tree is lit with 2,000 lights.



Center for Dairy Research Hosted WDPA Staff for a Tour and Meeting

A big Thank you to the Center for Dairy Research for hosting WDPA staff for a tour and discussion about issues impacting the dairy processing industry. WDPA past President Dean Sommer, John Lucey, Director of CDR, John Jaeggi, CDR Coordinator, Tom Guerin, CDR Research Program Manager and Andrea Miller, CDR Program Manager - Communications & Training were wonderful hosts and answered our many many questions. A special thanks to WDPA member Reggie Way from Nelson Jameson who set up the meeting. We look forward to working with the CDR in 2024.



Save the Date – WDPA Spring Golf Outing

Northern Bay Resort

May 15th and 16th



For more information, contact:

Tammy Brereton, WDPA Director of Membership and Programs

tammybrereton@wdpa.net