



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

June 3, 2016

June is Dairy Month!

June is Dairy Month in Wisconsin! In the month of June, many counties host dairy breakfasts across Wisconsin to showcase life on a dairy farm. There are events every weekend in June throughout the state. As someone who grew up on a dairy farm, there is nothing better than enjoying breakfast with your neighbors and friends while discussing agriculture.

The changes we have witnessed in the dairy industry over the last 50 years have had a major impact on the communities of the 17th Senate District. In 1954, there were 39 farm patrons for the cheese factory in the valley where I grew up in Spring Green. Today, there are no dairy farmers in that same valley.

All over the state, we see fewer farms, but bigger farms. Technology and science have changed the way we farm and the capacity of our farms to produce. Our cows are more productive. Our operations are more efficient. The farming lifestyle is different.

As a kid, I remember leaving picnics, parties and wedding receptions at 4:30 p.m., just as things were getting going, to milk cows. Today, larger operations and technology, have changed the lifestyle of the average dairy farmer.

The creativity of today's dairy producers extends beyond the science of herd management to out-of-the-box business practices that build unique selling points in competitive markets. Cows that are culled from herds today would have been kept in the past. The growth in technology and creative marketing enables farmers to grow revenue and increase streams of income. One farmer I know employs a Jewish Rabbi so that his farm can offer certified kosher milk. This a very creative and out-of-the-box way of building a unique selling point in the dairy market.

There are almost 10,000 licensed dairy farms in Wisconsin, with 1.28 million dairy cows. 96% of these farms are family-owned. Wisconsin generates almost 14% of all milk in the United States. Dairy means more to Wisconsin than citrus to Florida or potatoes to Idaho, generating a whopping \$43.4 billion to the economy of Wisconsin every year. Dairy is also the largest segment of Wisconsin's total agriculture industry of \$88.3 billion annually. In 2015, Wisconsin set a record for milk production at just over 29 billion pounds!

The production of cheese is also an important part of the state economy. Wisconsin produced over 3 billion pounds of cheese last year in 138 licensed plants across the state, which is 26% of all the cheese produced in the country. The best cheese in the world is clearly produced in the 17th Senate District, based on the many awards given to our local producers at the recent World Cheese Championship!

The economic impact of the dairy industry continues to grow. It has risen nearly 65% in the last five years. Wisconsin dairy exports brought almost \$1 billion to the state in 2014, more than triple the amount just five years earlier.

The Dairy Breakfasts and other events give local farmers and agricultural organizations the opportunity to show members of the community the importance of the dairy and agricultural industries in Wisconsin. As the most agriculture-dependent senate district in the state, it is up to the members of our communities to provide an opportunity for people who otherwise would not have a chance to visit a dairy farm to learn about the importance of dairy. Please consider attending a breakfast near you.

Grant County

Sunday, June 12th 7am-Noon
Grant County Fairgrounds
916 E Elm Road, Lancaster

Iowa County

Saturday, June 4th 6:30-10:30am
Jenniston Registered Holsteins-Thompson Family
3861 Thompson Road, Barneveld

Juneau County

Sunday, June 26th 7 – 11 a.m.
Schultz Park
301 South Main Street, Elroy

Lafayette County

Saturday, June 11th 6:30-10:30am
Gaylord Schultz Family Farm
4462 County Road DD, South Wayne

Monroe County

Saturday, June 4th 7-11am
Tom & Denise Murray Farm
26016 County Highway W, Kendall

Richland County

Sunday, June 12th 7am-1pm
Denise & Donald Sackmann Farm
24750 Keysville Ridge Road, Richland Center

Sauk County

Saturday, June 11th 7-11am
Kinnamon Ridge Dairy
S3457 Thomas Road, Reedsburg

Vernon County

Saturday, June 18th 7-11am
Ocooch Dairy, The Mlsna Family
E16843 Kouba Valley Road, Hillsboro

As your State Senator, I am looking forward to visiting most of the local breakfasts to enjoy the delicious meal, friendly conversation and a tour of each farm I visit. I encourage you to take the time to attend your local dairy breakfast to learn more about this vital industry.

For a full listing of breakfasts and other dairy events held throughout the state, please visit the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board's website: <http://www.dairydaysofsummer.com/>

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have input, ideas or need assistance with any state-related matters.

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