



Celebrate Wisconsin's Dairy Pride this June

A column from Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Brad Pfaff

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MADISON – The words “Wisconsin” and “dairy” go hand in hand. I cannot imagine one without the other. Wherever I go, when I introduce myself, people everywhere recognize Wisconsin as the place for beautiful dairy farms, productive cows, and of course, delicious cheese.

I am proud to be a dairy farmer’s son and grandson. The dairy farm is where I formed my values, learned the importance of hard work, and gained my perspective on life. I know my childhood experiences out in the barn with my family, going to school in a small town, and being active in my FFA chapter are not unique. It is why many dairy farmers today do what they do, to give their children an opportunity to grow up as they did on the farm.

I know dairy farmers across our state have faced tremendous challenges and hard decisions over the past five years. I recognize the extreme financial and emotional hardships these families have been experiencing. But this June Dairy Month, so I want us to highlight the great pride we have in Wisconsin for our dairy industry. It is the pride that keeps our dairy farmers going -- pride in their family, pride in their farms, and pride in our great state.

At every breakfast on the farm this month, and every county fair this summer, you’ll see this pride firsthand. I am so grateful for the farm families who have been working for months to prepare their barns and sheds to host thousands of visitors for a nutritious and delicious home-cooked meal. While the days have been long to get ready, these farm families are proud to open up their homes to their neighbors and share why they do what they do so we can all enjoy a safe, wholesome, and abundant food supply every day.

The county fair is where many farm kids make their best memories. Farmers are proud to exhibit the dairy cattle they’ve raised from birth. Grandparents and parents are proud to watch their children succeed in showmanship and see them grow as mentors to younger exhibitors. These farm kids will take their dairy pride into their own future careers, on and off the farm.

Even Wisconsinites who have never stepped on a farm or milked a cow share the pride in Wisconsin’s dairy industry. Wisconsinites drive their vehicles each day along the state’s highways and country roads promoting America’s Dairyland on their license plates. When Wisconsin’s cheesemakers win international awards for their products, the entire state celebrates with front-page news headlines.

Across Wisconsin, we should be proud of the great contributions dairy makes each day. Wisconsin’s dairy farms are diverse with different sizes and management types. Our dairy processors are innovative, producing high quality products for consumers worldwide. The entire dairy industry supports businesses, schools, communities, and the economy across Wisconsin. The proof of our dairy pride is on our heads, cheese heads that is, at football games each fall and winter.

Dairy farmers, be proud to share your story. Consumers, be proud that your state is a world-renowned dairy leader. I hope farmers and consumers can come together to celebrate this pride at a Dairy Month event this June. Find an event to celebrate your dairy pride at <https://hooraywisconsinidairy.com/>.

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