

Save the date!

2025 Annual Meeting - February 7-8
Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center
Onalaska, Wis



As preparation gets underway for the Annual Meeting, cooperative leadership would like to remind the membership about the silent auction that takes place during the meeting.

All the auction items are donated, and the proceeds go towards funding youth scholarships and activities. Over \$8000 has been raised through the silent auction in the last several years, helping to maintain our scholarship program for years to come.

If you would like to make a donation to this year's silent auction or know a vendor we should contact, please contact Toni at tonib@foxvalleyqclab.com or (920)573-6398.

All contributions are appreciated!

Call for Auction Items

Federal Milk Order
Market Information

OCTOBER 2024

Order Name and Number	UPPER MIDWEST	CENTRAL	MIDEAST
	Order 30	Order 32	Order 33
Producer Milk (lbs.)	1,619,300,985	1,055,577,591	1,680,265,358
Producer Price Differential @ base zone	\$ (0.47)	\$ (1.17)	\$ (0.67)
Statistical Uniform Price/cwt @ 3.5% BF*	\$ 22.38	\$ 21.68	\$ 22.18
Class I Price/cwt	\$ 24.97	\$ 25.17	\$ 25.17
Class II Price/cwt	\$ 21.01	\$ 21.01	\$ 21.01
Class III Price/cwt	\$ 22.85	\$ 22.85	\$ 22.85
Class IV Price/cwt	\$ 20.90	\$ 20.90	\$ 20.90
Component Prices & Test Avg. % aves			
Butterfat/lb.	\$ 3.0851 4.30%	4.19%	4.20%
Protein/lb.	\$ 3.3238 3.32%	3.36%	3.30%
Other Solids/lb.	\$ 0.3705 5.79%	5.80%	5.76%
SCC Adjust Rate/1000	\$ 0.00112		
Producer Milk Classified %			
Class I	10.30%	34.89%	36.77%
Class II	10.70%	15.15%	22.83%
Class III	68.70%	23.47%	28.66%
Class IV	10.3%	26.49%	11.74%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

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Madison, WI
53708-0380

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Scholarship Program

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Applicants must be a son/daughter of a FarmFirst member.
- Applicants may only receive a scholarship once.
- Students may pursue any post high school education.
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HOW TO APPLY?

- Go to www.FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com
- Click on "Member Services", the "Scholarship"
- Download the PDF or complete the online form.
- Applications are DUE: March 31st, 2025
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Contact us at: info@farmfirstdairycooperative.com
or (608)244-3373



December 2024

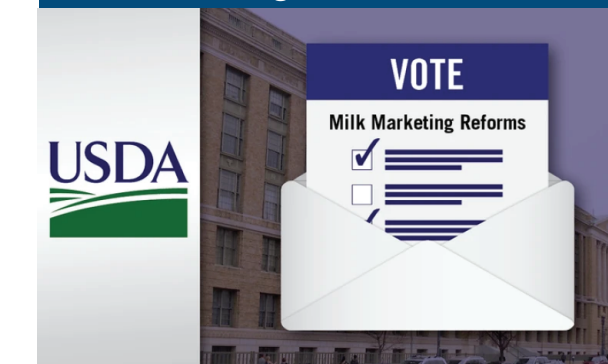
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USDA calls for Dairy Farmer Vote on Federal Milk Marketing Order



Currently, the Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) covers 11 regions in the United States, but not all 50 states and three-fourths of U.S. milk production. The FMMO System was put in place to ensure fair trade between farmers and processors and look out for the best interests of dairy farmers. It allows for regulations that would otherwise not exist within the milk marketing system. Because of this, farmers can produce milk with ease of mind.

In early November, the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) issued a final decision on the FMMO reform process that started back in 2023. There were only minor changes between the recommended decision released on July 1, 2024, and the final decision. The proposal amends the uniform pricing formulas applicable in all 11 federal milk marketing orders. This rulemaking proceeding was requested by the dairy industry to evaluate changes to the uniform pricing formulas applicable to all 11 FMMOs.

The proposed changes are based on substantial input and must be approved by eligible producers in each marketing order via a producer referendum before they take effect. The decision makes the following changes to July's proposal.

- Reduction in the delayed implementation of the revised skim milk composition factors from 12 months to six months.
- Inclusion of a \$0.0015 marketing cost factor in all make allowances.
- A modification to the methodology used to determine the nonfat dry milk make allowance.
- Limited changes to certain county-specific Class I differentials

Once the rule is published in the Federal Register, USDA will conduct producer referendums in the 11 orders. Producers whose milk was pooled on an FMMO in January 2024 are eligible to participate in the referendum. Producers and cooperatives will have the opportunity to vote in favor of or in opposition to the FMMOs.

The AMS will mail ballots out to eligible farmers and qualified cooperative associations who were pooled on a federal order during January 2024 to vote on the proposed changes. Ballots must be postmarked by December 31, 2024, and returned by January 15, 2025, to be counted.

The final decision follows a 49-day national hearing held from August 23, 2023, to January 30, 2024, where AMS heard testimony and received evidence on 21 proposals from the dairy industry. USDA published its recommended decision based on the hearing testimony in July and received 128 comments on it.

Copies of the final decision, information on the producer referendum process, and the entire hearing record can be found on the hearing website or obtained from USDA/AMS/Dairy Program.

This upcoming vote is a pivotal moment for the dairy industry and its stakeholders. The potential financial implications and operational adjustments underscore the importance of each vote. Dairy farmers are encouraged to stay informed and actively participate in shaping the future through this referendum. Two-thirds of the farmers or two-thirds of the pooled milk in each order needs to vote to accept the changed FMMO language; otherwise, that specific order will be terminated.

The board of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative made a motion to nominate the President to vote yes to accept the amendments of the FMMO on behalf of the membership, this motion was accepted after discussion of the referendum. For more information contact Mick Homb at FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative at (608)244-3373.

Member Reminder: Submit your resolutions by December 31st.

Members are encouraged to submit resolutions to be considered for the Districting and Resolutions (D&R) committee. The D&R committee will meet in early January to review all submitted resolutions and prepare final resolutions to be presented for delegate vote at the 2025 Annual meeting.

How to submit a resolution:

- By email-send resolutions to mhomb@farmfirstdairycoop.com
 - Include "Resolutions" in the subject line.
- My mail – send your written resolutions to the FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative office, located at
 - 4001 Nakoosa Trail, Suite 100, Madison, WI 53714
- All resolutions must be submitted by December 31st, 2024.

Recipe Corner.

STICKY BUNS - THIEL CHRISTMAS TRADITION

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/4 cups chopped pecans
- 16 frozen rolls
- 3.4 ounce box cook & serve butterscotch or vanilla pudding mix
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 3/4 cup brown sugar packed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

BAKING

1. Grease a 10-inch tube pan with nonstick baking spray.
2. Sprinkle the chopped pecans in the bottom of the tube pan.
3. Place the frozen rolls over the pecans in the bottom of the tube pan.
4. Sprinkle the dry pudding mix over the rolls.
5. In a separate microwave-safe bowl, melt the butter.
6. Stir in the brown sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla.
7. Pour the butter mixture over the rolls.
8. Cover the pan tightly with aluminum foil.
9. Let sit at room temperature overnight.



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Dedicated to serving and representing you, our family farm members, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative represents farms in Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana through policy advocacy, dairy marketing services, laboratory testing opportunities and industry promotion.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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visit us at
FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com



Cooperative Happenings

District meeting wrap up

The Annual Fall District meetings wrapped up in early December, which brought members together to learn more about this year's accomplishments. Thank you to all the members that were able to come to these meetings, asked questions, and shared their opinions on industry programs. Stay tuned for the 2024 delegate election results for the annual meeting, newly appointed districting and resolutions committee members and directors for the cooperative board.

If you missed a meeting, here are a few highlights:

- Three new employees
- 20 Scholarship recipients
- Numerous sponsorships in the dairy industry
- Partner with many other cooperatives
- Events and trade shows
- Leadership, education, networking for the Young Cooperator Program
- Milk Income Loss Program for milk income loss due to natural event
- Three profitable divisions
- Member Services - test verification, bulk tank calibrations, FARM certification
- Milk Marketing Division - contracted milk marketing
- Lab Division - milk and water testing in the Midwest
- FMMO Modernization Update and upcoming vote



District meetings provide members a chance to meet others from their region and network. Directors and field staff receive feedback during these district



Cooperative membership

Meet your member - Wilbar Dairy, Auburndale, Wisconsin



As I am driving down County Road K in Wood County, I crest a small knoll and to my right lies the green and white farm buildings and what looks to me like miles of silage bales lined in rows. I turn into the driveway and met by the welcoming committee, two Welsh Corgi's, a Burnese Mountain Dog, and Roscoe. Today, I am visiting Barb and Bill Thiel. The Thiel's along with their four children, Brice (21), Brett (19), Brenna (15), and Blair (12) are first generation dairy farmers of Wilbar Dairy in Auburndale, Wisconsin. Their milk is shipped to Dairy State Cheese Company in Rudolph, Wisconsin.

The couple, both raised on dairy farms, decided to purchase their own farm in 2004. They started with 32 cows, bought from Barb's parents, and have grown to 300 milking Registered Holstein and Brown Swiss and 300 replacement heifers.

Over the 20 years, the original 70 tie stall barn has been replaced by a double eight step up parlor, a 200 free stall facility and bed pack, a heifer barn, a 50 individual calf stall barn, and recently a state-of-the-art heated machine shop. In 2004 they rented 150 acres and bought most of their feed. Today, they own 200 acres and rent another 350 acres, and with the help of their two eldest children, do their own tilling, planting and most of their own harvesting.

Most days, you will find Barb down in her calf barn, out of the elements since 2019 when the calf hutches were replaced. She loves bringing newborn calves into the

world, keeping them healthy, and watching them grow up to be productive cows. The girls can be found in the calf barn every night helping mom, too.

Bill is the herdsman and enjoys the rewards of breeding and raising his own cattle. The best decision of the farm was the addition of the first free stall facility. Cow comfort is key, getting the cows in sand bedded stalls was key in building the herd to the size it is today.

The kids all have active parts in the farm and enjoy showing their Brown Swiss in 4-H and FFA. Brice and Brett do most of the planting and harvesting. They also are full time students. Brice attends Chippewa Valley Technical College for diesel mechanics and Brett attends Fox Valley Technical College for Precision Ag. They are both home on the weekends to help while their milking staff is off.

In their spare time, you will find the family at many of the kids sporting events, 4-H shows, FFA judging competitions, Badger games, and sometimes just taking a trail ride on their horses.

The Thiel's credit their parents for forming their love of dairy farming and teaching them the value of being their own boss. To this day, they keep learning from special neighbors, 4-H leaders, veterinarians, nutritionists, agronomists, and even their own kids.

The family has been members of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative since 2013. Article by Cheryl Harrmann, Director of Lab Services at Fox Valley Quality Control Lab

Message from the Lab

Proper use of teat sealant

Article by Cheryl Harrmann, Director of Lab Services at Fox Valley Quality Control Lab

In the last several months, the lab has been experiencing an uptick in maintenance due to residue build up in the lines the milk runs through to be tested. The lines are tiny tubes that only piano wire can fit through. So, imagine for a second, running your \$500,000 combine through a marsh of cattails and muck. How will that machine perform for you after a few days of mud? The same thing happens at the lab. These tiny tubes build up with a greasy slime. The lab has been rejecting several samples due to debris in the vial of milk. Debris in vials of milk can be a few things, such as, improper cleaning of the udder and teat, improper cleaning of your hands while taking the sample, simply unsanitary conditions in the environment. But what has been causing the greasy buildup in the tubes, pipette, and valves of the machine? We have narrowed the culprit down to the improper use of teat sealant.

Teat sealant is for use in dry cow as an aid in the prevention of new intramammary infections throughout the dry period. This sealant provides an antibiotic free malleable barrier in the teat canal reducing the incidence of mastitis and lowering somatic cell counts.

X-ray images have shown that teat sealant treated teat ends will remain sealed for at least 100 days, or until the sealant is stripped out at calving. Each tube of teat sealant contains bismuth subnitrate in an oil base. The problem that the lab has been experiencing, is a buildup of an oil-based substrate. Just because the manufacturer claims teat sealant is safe to be removed by hand stripping, ingested by the calf, or removed via a milking machine, that isn't always the proper way to be handling those cows treated with teat sealant. If many cattle are freshened together and teat sealant is removed via milking machines, it will build up on filters. After a lot of research, here is the proper way to handle treated cows after using your current dry cow therapy.

Review the following practices for teat sealant removal with all employees on a recurring basis by following these steps provided by the manufacturer:

1. To effectively strip teat sealant, be sure to grab the TOP of the teat-where it meets the udder-and work all the way down. Don't grab the middle of the teat; squeeze and work down, this will only clear the bottom half of the teat. Strip the entire quarter by starting at the top and working all the way down.
2. Strip aggressively-10 to 12 times per quarter for the first four days post freshening. This helps to ensure that you're removing the plug and all particles of teat sealant. DO NOT REMOVE TEAT SEALANT BY ACTION OF THE MILKING MACHINE.
3. Milk into a bucket for the first three to four days post freshening. This will help to remove any remaining particles of teat sealant.



Teat sealant buildup in a milk vial sample.

