

2025 Annual Meeting: 'Shaping Tomorrow Together'



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Time to renew your WI Livestock Premise Registration



When it comes to protecting your livestock, whether that be a flock of backyard chickens or dairy cows or anything in between, there are a few key steps to take including biosecurity measures and limited traffic on your property and with your animals. As a livestock owner in Wisconsin, registering your premises with the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium (WLIC) is an important step.

What is WLIC?

WLIC is a private, non-profit organization that works to protect animal health and prevent the spread of disease through livestock and premises identification and traceability. Founded in 2001, WLIC serves as a third-party organization to manage premises registration and renewals while working in stride with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

Do I have to register my premises?

Yes, it is required by law to register any location in Wisconsin with livestock species on it. Following the December 2003 incident of a dairy cow testing positive for Mad Cow disease in Washington State, the Wisconsin

legislature passed a law requiring every livestock owner in the state to register their premises.

What livestock should be registered?

The following livestock should be listed on your premises registration by species:

- Beef breed Cattle
- Dairy breed Cattle
- Bison
- South American camelids such as llamas and alpacas
- Captive Cervids such as deer, elk, moose, caribou, reindeer, etc
- Pigs
- Goats
- Sheep
- Chickens – even if it's just one!
- Poultry, Guineas, Captive Gamebirds, Ratites
- Horses (including mules and donkeys)
- Fish and aquaculture if you require a Wisconsin Fish Farm license

What information is provided to register or renew my livestock premises?

Registration of livestock premises includes registration of the address where the livestock are held, the types of livestock (bovine, swine, equine, etc), first and last name, a phone number, email address, and a mailing address if different than the livestock

address. WLIC does not record any information regarding the number of animals at any location to protect producer privacy.

All locations where livestock are housed (if not on the same property), even seasonally, are required to be registered. Once a premises ID is assigned, it remains with that location.

Is my information ever shared?

Livestock premises registration is protected by Wis. Stat. 95.51 and Administrative Code ATCP 17.03, requiring producer data to remain confidential. As well, WLIC is a private non-profit organization, not a government agency, and cannot disclose premises registration information from public inquiries.

How do I register or renew my livestock premises?

It is easy! Simply visit WLIC's website (wiid.org) and select 'Register Your Premises'. Complete the online form and you will receive your premises ID within 1-3 business days. You may also call WLIC at 888-808-1910 (weekdays, 8am-4pm) to renew your premises registration over the phone.

When should I renew?

The best time to renew is now through June. All Premises IDs have the same expiration date (7/31/25), and renewing promptly ensures that you receive prompt service, and avoid unnecessary letters and reminder emails. Continued on pg 3

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.

DECEMBER 2024

	UPPER MIDWEST	CENTRAL	MIDEAST
Order Name and Number	Order 30	Order 32	Order 33
Producer Milk (lbs.)	2,077,772,214	1,169,698,971	1,533,420,317
Producer Price Differential @ base zone	\$ 0.36	\$ 1.33	\$ 1.89
Statistical Uniform Price/cwt @ 3.5% BF*	\$ 22.18	\$ 19.94	\$ 20.51
Class I Price/cwt	\$ 23.23	\$ 23.43	\$ 23.43
Class II Price/cwt	\$ 21.28	\$ 21.28	\$ 21.28
Class III Price/cwt	\$ 18.68	\$ 18.62	\$ 18.62
Class IV Price/cwt	\$ 20.74	\$ 20.74	\$ 20.74
<b>Component Prices &amp; Test Avg. % aves</b>			
Butterfat/lb.	\$ 2.9104 4.47%	4.38%	4.42%
Protein/lb.	\$ 1.9637 3.37%	3.44%	3.38%
Other Solids/lb.	\$ 0.4493 5.7%	5.80%	5.78%
SCC Adjust Rate/1000	\$ 0.00088		
<b>Producer Milk Classified %</b>			
Class I	7.90%	31.00%	40.38%
Class II	1.40%	6.85%	11.49%
Class III	89.6%	51.60%	43.55%
Class IV	1.1%	10.75%	4.66%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Federal Milk Order Market Information



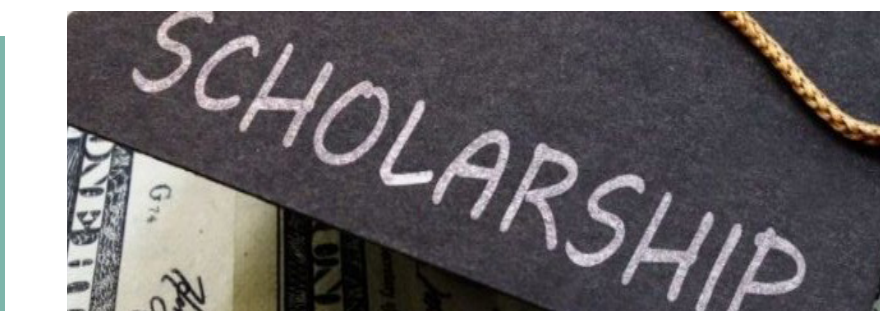
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 MADISON, WI  
 PERMIT NO. 549

Attention Members:

- The Milkline newsletter will now be mailed quarterly. (Jan, Apr, July, Oct)
- For up to date happenings, have you subscribed to our E-Newsletter?
- <https://www.farmfirstdairycooperative.com/milkline-newsletter/>
- Bring this newsletter to any upcoming farm shows and find the FFDC booth to be entered into a drawing.

Upcoming events:

- Central Plains Dairy Expo, March 25-27, 2025, Sioux Falls, SD
- WPS Farm Show, April 1-3, 2025, Oshkosh, WI



FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is committed to investing in its youth, and is proud to annually present scholarships to several students pursuing higher education across the cooperative's membership. The scholarship program is open to students pursuing degrees in any field from a college or university or technical or community college. Due: March 31st See website for more information.

[www.farmfirstdairycooperative.com/membership/scholarships/scholarship-form](http://www.farmfirstdairycooperative.com/membership/scholarships/scholarship-form)



Shaping Tomorrow Together

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Annual Meeting February 7-8th, 2025

Stoney Creek Hotel and Event Center, Onalaska, WI

Join us for an event filled with intrigue and excitement, where we come together to shape a brighter future.

Friday, February 7th 1:30 PM: Producer Discovery Workshop - Uncover the hidden truths of the FARM program with Beverly Hampton Phifer (NMPF Senior Director of Animal Care) and FarmFirst's certified animal evaluators.

Later in the day, learn how to use Wisconsin cheeses with the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin making the ultimate charcuterie board.

As night falls, anticipation builds for the arrival of a mysterious guest. Who is this master conjurer? What tricks do we have up our sleeves? Only those present will discover the truth.

Following the banquet, our annual live auction begins. The stakes are high, the treasures invaluable, and our efforts will help support our scholarship program.

Saturday, February 8th: Our business meeting will determine the future as we shape tomorrow together. Keynote address by Kevin Beauchamp, President of Galloway Company in Neenah, WI will inspire you as you learn the role of dairy farmers and processors in our future.

For more information, contact Jeff Ditzenberger at [jditzenberger@farmfirstcoop.com](mailto:jditzenberger@farmfirstcoop.com) or 608-286-1909.



For hotel reservations: A block of rooms have been reserved for FarmFirst members. When calling mention FarmFirst for the block room rate.

Stoney Creek Hotel & Event Center  
 3060 S Kinney Coulee Road  
 Onalaska, WI 54650

(608)781-3060

or scan QR code to register



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President: John Rettler  
Neosho, Wis. 920-625-3237

Vice-President: Steve Brock  
Daggett, Mich. 906-290-1917

Secretary: Stephanie Hughes  
Pittsville, Wis. 715-307-1520

Treasurer: Bob Dietzel  
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Young Cooperator Rep: Nathan Wiese  
Rosendale, Wis. 920-960-1813

Kathy Bauer - Faribault, Minn. 507-332-2870

Wayne Gajewski- Athens, Wis. 715-370-5078

Jackie Holub - Boyd, Wis. 715-667-5391

Michelle Popp - Unity, Wis. 715-613-0499

Mark Leichtfuss – Two Rivers, Wis. 920-517-0765

**MEMBER SERVICES FIELD STAFF**

Barbara Grzywinski - Eden, Wis. 920-901-6346

Mike Richter - Rice Lake, Wis. 715-296-3684

Abby Walker - Lancaster, Wis. 920-373-3513

Rick Wolfe - Aniwa, Wis. 715-581-4321

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**FOX VALLEY QC LAB**

Cheryl Harmann, Lab Director - 920-731-5484

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FarmFirstDairyCooperative.com



Cooperative Happenings

**Cooperative Election Results**

Members had the opportunity to nominate and vote for members to serve as delegates for the upcoming Annual Meeting of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. Several districts were open for election for Board of Directors and Districting and Resolutions (D&R) Committee. Below are the individuals that were elected in their respective districts:

**Delegates for 2025 Annual Meeting**

**District 1:** Scott Mellgren, Kevin Hoewisch, Henry Granskog, David Wagner

**District 2:** Andy Meyer, Eugene Hansen, Russel Braun, Chris Kestell (D&R) Alternate: Dan Vandertie

**District 3:** Travis Clark, Nathan Wiese, Loron Bock, Lee Klumpers, Earl Van Ruiswijk (D&R), Mike Paulus

**District 4:** Jeff Osborn, David Hanneman (D&R), Julie Stowe, James Juedes, Keith Kraeger Alternates: Tom Bunhilnan, Travis Denhel

**District 5:** Abby Swan, Tom Bauer, Peggy Pankratz, Tom Bauer, Charles Warzynski

**District 6:** Mark Decker, Kurt Schmitt, Jerry Hammerand (D&R), Mike Kempfer, Carrie Ritschard. Tim Goedken Alternates: Becky Mueller, Pat Leonard, Josh Blough

**District 7:** Dean Hoesly, Paul Fischer (D&R), Mitch Malm, Melissa Boehlke, Tom Shafto, Dean Schmelzer, Richard Meyer, Randy Meyer

**District 8:** Gary Kohn (D&R), George Polzin, Kyle Sikora, Matt Winne, Matt George

**District 9:** Brad Meyer, Anne Borgschatz, Joe Bragger, Kevin Knapp (D&R) Alternates: Bill Post, Richard Rosen

**Board of Directors**

**District 1:** Dave Johnson

**District 3:** John Rettler

**District 5:** Stephanie Hughes



Cooperative Happenings

**Employee highlight**



Welcome Jeff Ditzenberger:

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative's New Director of Communications and Marketing

FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative is thrilled to welcome Jeff Ditzenberger as our new Director of Communications and Marketing. Raised on a dairy farm in southern Wisconsin, Jeff has been deeply involved in agriculture for most of his life. Throughout his career, he has held various positions in agricultural sales and marketing. Jeff is also the founder of TUGS, a non-profit organization dedicated to addressing

the stigma of mental health issues within the agricultural community and beyond.

"I am looking forward to working for an organization whose mission and values align with my own passion for the dairy industry," said Jeff. "It will be a privilege to work with and promote the services and advocacy that FarmFirst provides to its members."

In his new role, Jeff will oversee all marketing, communications, and public relations efforts to promote the services and programs that FarmFirst offers. He will also manage and oversee the member services division.

"Jeff brings a strong agricultural background that includes exceptional sales and marketing skills, along with a team-focused and team-building mindset," said Mick Homb, General Manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative. "We are excited to have him join us and feel that his skills and experience will be a great addition to our management team."

In the short time that FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative has employed Ditz he is making friends and working well with all. His enthusiasm for farmers is contagious and they are his top priority.

In his spare time you might have seen him around the area sporting a red and white coat and cap, "Ho-Ho-ing through the holidays.

And just call him, "Ditz." 🐄

**WLIC Premise Registration continued.**

Livestock owners are also encouraged to contact WLIC to update existing registration information in situations at any time of year such as when contact information changes (phone numbers, emails, mailing address), premises ownership changes, species type changes, if the property is sold, or if livestock are no longer on the property.

**How does renewing my livestock premises help protect against an animal disease outbreak?**

Registration information is used to quickly communicate with potentially impacted livestock owners as well as provide Wisconsin animal health officials with data on how many livestock premises are within close proximity of an infected premises. Depending on the mobility of the disease, officials may identify zones to limit or stop livestock movement and reduce the risk of spreading the disease.

Without this information, they cannot efficiently respond, allowing an outbreak to spread before containment. History has shown us that an animal disease outbreak can have disastrous effects on farmers, the community and economy. Don't delay – renew your livestock premises registration today! Visit [wiid.org](http://wiid.org) or call 888-808-1910.

Julie Sweny is the Executive Director at the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium (WLIC), which is a private, non-profit (501c3) organization working to protect animal health through traceability by premises identification used to prevent the spread of livestock disease. For more information or to become a member or sponsor, visit [www.wiid.org](http://www.wiid.org) or call 888-808-1910.

Member Spotlight

**Fred and Kathy Broker**



**Broker Farms: 50 Years of Quality Milk**

In 2024, Broker Farms hit a big milestone—50 years of producing top-notch milk. Fred Broker's journey started when he was just a kid on a farm north of Poskin, WI. After his family's farm was sold in 1967, Fred worked on Lyman Erickson's farm during his teenage years. He later earned a Dairy Management certificate from WITC in Rice Lake and attended farm business management night classes for 40 years. Kathy (Erickson), who grew up on a farm south of Rice Lake, met Fred at the Barron County Fair in 1972, and they tied the knot in 1974. Kathy also earned an associate degree in accounting.

From 1974 to 1977, Fred and Kathy rented a 120-acre farm north of Barron, where Fred milked thirty-five cows and Kathy worked in bookkeeping for Barron County Public Health. Kathy also helped out with the fieldwork. In 1977, they bought a 150-acre farm and milked an average of fifty-five cows for the next 25 years while raising their three kids: Julie, Mike, and Sarah.

Fred and Kathy's children have all found ways to stay connected to the farm and contribute:

- Julie and her husband Joe Moenck moved back to Barron County in 2021 after living in the Rochester and Zumbrota, MN, area for 20 years. Julie works remotely for Mayo Clinic, and Joe is the Director of Organizing for the Minnesota Pipe Trade Association. Joe jokes that he's a "third string" milker, and they love spending time with family and enjoying their home on Red Cedar Lake.
  - Mike returned to the farm after getting his degree in Dairy Science from UW-River Falls. He married Cindy (Uher) in 2002. Cindy also has a degree from UW-River Falls in AgBusiness/Accounting and works as the Assistant Controller at Rice Lake Weighing Systems. Their two sons, Daniel and Garrett, help out on the farm and are involved in their community. Daniel excelled in FFA, placing in the top sixteen in the nation for creed speaking in 2023, and Garrett is active in basketball, 4-H, and farm activities.
  - Sarah and her husband Chuck Fastner live in Pewaukee, WI, with their son Mason. Sarah works for Baker Tilly as a senior manager of Talent Attraction, and Chuck is a Vice President at Direct Supply. They enjoy traveling, chasing Mason, and spending summers on the boat. Mason loves feeding minerals with Uncle Mike and riding tractors, while Chuck provides tech support.
- Over the years, the farm has seen several expansions:
- 2002: A new free stall barn and manure pit were built, expanding the herd to 120 cows.
  - 2003: A heifer barn was added.
  - 2017: The old heifer barn and parlor were replaced, and the free stall barn was expanded to include a new swing-twelve parlor, milkhouse, and transition cow housing. The heifer barn was also expanded.
- Today, Broker Farms has 180 cows, with about 160 milking at any given time, producing an average of eighty-five pounds of milk per cow. They now grow crops on approximately 375 acres of owned and rented land, providing all the grain and forage needs for the herd.
- The success of the farm relies on several valuable team members.
- Busse's Barron Acres and Halverson Cattle raise all calves from 0-5 months.
  - Ciara Williams has been with the farm since 2022 as the assistant herds person, managing many milking and cow care duties.
  - Ryan Erickson has worked part-time since 2017, milking and assisting with fieldwork when he's not teaching high school students.
  - Amber Anderson milks part-time in the summer when she's home from college.
- The farm has received many milk quality awards over the years and is recognized by the state for its excellent conditions through annual inspections. 🐄

Submitted article by Fred and Kathy Broker