

South Dakota Dairy Promotion Highlights

JULY 1, 2024 – JUNE 30, 2025



National Dairy Promotion Highlights

Dairy Management Inc. (DMI), which represents and implements the priorities, strategies, and programs of the national dairy checkoff program, works on behalf of America's dairy farmers, including the more than 130 South Dakota dairy farmers, to protect and grow sales and trust in dairy foods, dairy farmers, and the dairy community.

The foundation of this work is a nationwide Unified Marketing Plan that DMI develops and implements in partnership with 14 dairy promotion organizations – including Midwest Dairy – to align national and local dairy promotion strategies and activities focused on action in the following core priorities:

- **Sustainability:** Demonstrate that dairy is an environmental solution – backed by science and proof – and economically additive for farmers, markets, and society.
- **Innovation:** Develop technology-powered breakthrough science and innovations that advance U.S. dairy's wellness and product leadership.
- **Reputation:** Taking a louder, more proactive, and competitive approach to sharing dairy's indispensable role as a solution for consumer wellness and a societal solution for communities and environmental progress.
- **Exports:** Positioning U.S. dairy as a consistent, preferred supplier in key global markets.

Sustainability

MORE SOLUTIONS: Additional decision support resources, measurement tools and access to technical and financial assistance.

Greener Cattle Initiative

- A research collaboration with partners across the value chain, announced a second round of funding of \$5 million available for research focused on enabling enteric methane mitigation.
- Partners include the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research, the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding, Elanco, Genus PLC, the National Dairy Herd Information Association, Nestle and the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Center.

Results

- \$10 million for research, to date, has been made available representing a 10:1 return on investment.
- Grants have been awarded for research on genomic selection for low emitting cows, energy flows within the rumen to learn how energy that is lost as enteric

methane could potentially be redirected as fuel for the animal, and research on new methane inhibitors.

Find more information on their website about the research projects that have been awarded grants: [Greener Cattle Initiative - Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research](#).

Integrated Dairy Anaerobic Digestion (IDAD)

- IDAD research and modeling were conducted to determine the potential for anaerobic digestion technology to reduce GHG emissions.

Results

- IDAD model was [published](#) in July illustrating the potential for anaerobic digestion technology to reduce GHG emissions.

Animal Health, Efficiency and Resource Dynamics (HERD)

- Launched the HERD Initiative in May, a partnership between FFAR, DMI and Zoetis to advance our understanding of the interrelationships among dairy health/management and welfare, economics and the environment.

MORE PROOF: Documented progress is communicated broadly that increases consumer trust.

Life Cycle Assessments

- Announced plans to publish two new Life Cycle Assessments to establish US Dairy's GHG emissions baseline from which progress is measured on the U.S. Dairy 2050 GHG neutrality goal, and for modeling scenarios in the Strategic Roadmap to GHG Neutrality.

Results

- The Life Cycle Assessments will be published in the second half of 2025.
- Published a [2020 Farmgate Life Cycle Assessment](#) to refine greenhouse gas emission estimates for key sources, including enteric fermentation, manure and feed production.

Strategic Roadmap for GHG Neutrality

- The Strategic Roadmap for GHG Neutrality is under development. The roadmap will be a technical document that models potential scenarios for the U.S. dairy industry (field, farm and processor) to reduce GHG emissions using current technologies and practices.
- The Strategic Roadmap for GHG Neutrality will be published in late 2025.

MORE PARTNERS: Outside partners and investment extend checkoff dollars and influence.

Dairy Conservation Navigator

- An online resource hub, the [Dairy Conservation Navigator](#), was created for farm advisors, stakeholders and conservation professionals containing science-based information on sustainable farming practices and technologies.
- The resource contains information on over 80 practices that have positive environmental benefits in areas of nutrition management, methane reduction, soil health, manure handling and more.
- The [Dairy Conservation Navigator](#) launched at the Innovation Center's Dairy Sustainability Alliance meeting in November 2024.

Partnerships and external funding

- Partnerships and external funding are critical to support environmental research and action in dairy sustainability.
- \$28 million of new incremental investment from partners for pilot projects and research in dairy sustainability, going to support programs that empower sustainability action.
- One example is Feed in Focus, which aims to scale up the adoption of feed production and feed efficiency best management practices that have environmental and economic benefits for farms of all sizes.

Results

- To date, approximately 43 farmers are enrolled with sponsorships from Nestle, Domino's and General Mills.

Sustainability 101

- Hosted Sustainability 101 for DMI staff to pilot curriculum planned for future workshops in the states and regions.

Innovation

PARTNERS: Grow incremental and sustained dairy sales via partners, new platforms and technologies.

Leverage Power Partners

- Partnered with leaders in Foodservice, Retail and Consumer Packaged Goods to launch disruptive new products and marketing programs.
- Launched more than 12 new products: Taco Bell Cheesy Chalupa and Churro Chillers test market, Domino's New York Style Pizza and 5-Cheese Mac and Cheese, McDonald's Grandma McFlurry, \$5 Value, Chicken Big Mac and Snack Size McFlurry, General Mills Yoplait Protein and YoBark, DFA's Tru Moo Star Wars Blue Milk, Darigold's Belle Creamers and DARI's MOO'V Chocolate Milk, among others.



Results

- Retail: Yogurt Category volume grew 7.6%, General Mills new product volume 48.8 million pounds.
- Fluid Milk: Value-Added volume grew 5.9%, Lactose Free + flavored volume grew 10.8%, Alternatives declined 5.4%
- Launched major innovation, including Domino's 5-Cheese Mac & Cheese continues after being launched in Sept 2024 and launched Parmesan Stuffed Crust in March 2025.

Use Modern Technology Tools to Accelerate Commercialization and Innovation

- Identified \$350 billion of potential Health and Wellness growth spaces for dairy.
- Launched an Artificial Intelligence (AI) database to accelerate science insights and research to yield speed to market for nutritional science benefits for the body and products to meet health and wellness needs.
- Conducted outreach and briefed potential partners who possess capabilities to commercialize micro-encapsulation technology. Encapsulation technology is a novel ingredient technology to revolutionize and position dairy for modern health

and wellness that is being developed to microencapsulate two dairy bio-actives to address consumer needs.

Results

- **AI Database:** Successfully launched and on-boarded our industry's science and innovation leaders to leverage for growth.
- **Product Science:** Funded 16 new multi-year, product technology projects, related to the areas of health and wellness products to enable commercialization of products for domestic and export snacking and sustainable processing.
- **Encapsulation:** Completed the commercial scale-up production trial of encapsulated products, validated efficacy of patent processes and began formal commercialization efforts.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS: Grow, protect and promote dairy science by utilizing nutrition research, science platforms and collaborations.

- Continued collaboration with Mayo Clinic to further research the role of dairy in meeting consumer health demands, and also extend consumer reach by initiating studies, publishing papers, and delivering presentations.
- Advanced health & wellness science and modern messages through publishing Chapter 1 of the Health & Wellness Playbook (an industry resource for dairy claims, messaging and supporting science).
- Activated the first complete dairy milk molecule database to connect all the components of milk with all the scientific research around the world against those components, to dramatically accelerate learning and insights.

Results

- **NDC Research and Publications:** Published five new papers in global nutrition and in the consumer areas of immunity and heart health, and initiated nine new studies in growth and performance, childhood health, mental & emotional health, sleep and heart health to prove new benefits of dairy foods.
- **Nutrition Science Briefings:** Delivered 44 scientific presentations and briefings to health care professionals and thought leaders, reaching over 150 scientists from various sectors and 100,000 physicians at Mayo Clinic.
- **Mayo Clinic:** Started three research projects in cardiovascular health. Initiated two projects in the key future health and wellness territories of personalized nutrition and gut microbiome.
- Completed over 35 claims supporting the publication of the Health & Wellness Playbook Chapter 1 and delivered over 50 messages to the dairy industry.

- Milk Molecule: Onboarded eight farmer-owned entities to utilize the platform. Checkoff formed a Science Advisory Council to start exploring new molecules and bioactives to start prioritizing research against.

OUTSIDE INVESTMENT: Attract and secure outside investment through engagements to connect dairy innovators with investors and pair them with new dairy growth opportunities.

- Completed and shared three growth landscapes with leading dairy companies. Identified the landscapes and sized the markets and growth rates for domestic foodservice, retail beverages, and retail health and wellness spending against key health conditions and benefits, starting with health and wellness.
- Led nine university health and wellness innovation events at seven universities to share dairy's growth opportunity in the health & wellness space.

Results

- Dissemination of the Health & Wellness Landscape was attended by over 2,500 participants.
- Nationally, more than \$8 billion of new infrastructure against dairy announced and in progress.
- Student and university engagement with over 200 students in dairy challenges.

Reputation

WIN IN KEY CHANNELS: Deliver breakthrough consumer content to grow dairy's positive share of voice in the most critical channels for youth and parents.

Activate Digital Ecosystem: Search & Social

- Delivered always-relevant "edu-tainment" to continue winning hearts, minds and stomachs for dairy, focusing on key pillars of gut health, functional wellness and responsible production as most resonate with target audiences.

Results

- USDairy.com traffic logged 5.8 million pageviews (85% increase over 2023) and 4.3 million total users (95% increase over 2023).

Leverage Paid & Owned Media

- Efficiently used existing budgets for media buys around priority topics, including dairy's benefits to health and wellness (childhood development, protein, gut

health), dairy's role in food security and ongoing progress within environmental sustainability, giving dairy more media exposure without increasing budget spent.

- Media partners featured longer “advertorial” stories, and included USA Today, TIME, Women’s Health, Men’s Health and Good Housekeeping.

Results

- Facebook and Instagram ads drove 7 thousand link clicks to USA Today and TIME, and 22K link clicks to Good Housekeeping and Women’s Health.
- TIME milk safety article generated more than 241,000 impressions and 3,800 link clicks.

Work with Influential Creators

- Engaged 14 influencers (aka “The Dairy Dream Team”) across multiple topic areas—including health and wellness, fitness, culinary, parenting and humor—to create unique content around dairy.

Results

- Dairy Dream Team logged 75 posts, secured 155 million impressions, 51 million video views and 1.2 million engagements (likes, comments, shares) in 2024.

eCommerce

- Partnered with 14 dairy checkoff state and regional organizations to activate retail efforts in 2024, including Instacart, Walmart, Kroger and Dollar General. Content highlighted dairy’s affordability, versatility and nutrition benefits.

Results

- For every dollar invested across the national and state/regional checkoffs into eCommerce, we saw a return of \$17.09 in dairy sales.

Experiential

- Showcased dairy’s versatility and global appeal to an influential audience at Food Network’s New York Food & Wine Festival featuring Snoop Dogg and celebrity chefs Bobby Flay and Rachael Ray.

Results

- Reached more than 6,000 foodie consumers and influencers at the celeb-studded event and more than 7,000 impressions via influencer outreach.

Leveraging Instacart's Super Bowl Debut



- Instacart launched their first-ever commercial during the Big Game in February 2025, highlighting iconic food mascots and featuring milk as the must-have essential at the end of the spot.
- Milk was the only non-branded food item included, at no cost to dairy farmers.
- Amplified with a four-week Instacart ad campaign promoting lactose-free and whole milk to drive sales before, during and after the big game.

Results

- Generated over \$3 million in sales, \$30 return on ad spend and 10% of buyers were “new to brand”.

Build Relevance with Youth

Improve School Milk Experience Via Pilots

- Created a three-group pilot among elementary schools and high schools comparing results from adding lactose-free shelf-stable white milk and chocolate milk, with and without restrictions (doctor's note).

Results

- The district has committed to expanding the availability of lactose-free milk to all students in all schools next school year.
- Average Daily Participation ADP, milk consumption and student attitudes towards milk all improved with the introduction of chocolate lactose-free, shelf stable milk.

Modernize Nutrition Education & Communications and Expand Access to School Breakfast

- Offered grants and resources during two key campaign periods: “Road to School Breakfast” (spring) and “Fuel Up First” (fall).

Results

- Funded nearly 800 school equipment grants to increase dairy consumption, impacting access to dairy via more than 100 million school meals.

ACTIVATE THIRD PARTY VOICES: Engage the most influential experts and thought leaders in media, medicine, science and education to scale credibility and reach consumers.

Maintain Dairy's Place in Federal Guidelines and Programs

- Shared the comprehensive body of scientific evidence on the critical contributions of dairy foods to the health and wellness of Americans for Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) 2025-2030 planning cycle.
- Invested in research and engaged with third-party science, health and wellness partners and stakeholders to educate on the health benefits of dairy foods.

Results

- The DGA Committee expressed intent to maintain the dairy food group and recommendation for three servings of dairy per day.
- Committee recognized the importance of dairy foods to meet diverse needs of Americans across racial and ethnic backgrounds and did not propose additional plant-based alternatives beyond fortified soy within the dairy food group.

Highlight Dairy's Cultural Relevance

National Medical Association (NMA)

- Secured endorsement from NMA, the nation's largest black physician organization, confirming dairy's role across the lifespan for Black Americans through publication of a six-paper journal supplement.
- Conducted training sessions for NMA members to educate on dairy's place in the diet.

Results

- Reached more than 1,000 NMA physicians with education and outreach sessions at all NMA regional meetings and the annual NMA convention, promoting cultural relevance of dairy foods among Black Americans.

- NMA briefings with The White House, Congressional Black Caucus, and other agencies shared dairy science and the role of healthy eating patterns in addressing health disparities.

Next Gen/Early Career Scientist Cohort

- Symposia, workshops and trainings engaged early-career (Next Gen) thought leaders around dairy's health benefits.
- Co-sponsored Howard University's Annual Health Disparities Symposium, Advancing Healthy Equity: Leveraging Culturally Responsive Solutions, bringing together a dynamic roster of thought leaders from the government, academic and non-profit sectors.

Results

- More than 200 health professionals, nutrition scientists and physicians attended Howard University symposium.
- Highlighted cultural relevancy of dairy foods in addressing health disparities, including diet-related chronic diseases that disproportionately impact people of color.

Bring New Dairy Science to Light – Dairy Matrix Symposium

- Touted dairy's "undercover nutrition" with key science audience – convened a new scientific conference to amplify the science on dairy foods' unique molecular compositions, as well as dairy fat's neutral to beneficial links to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure.

Results

- Engaged 100 highly credentialed participants including attendees and speakers from National Institutes of Health, Johns Hopkins University and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.
- Connected the latest dairy matrix science to public health needs and emphasized the importance of collaboration within the dairy industry.
- While food matrix science is complex, compelling content and voices can illustrate potential for incorporating dairy foods at all fat levels within a healthy eating pattern.

Health and Wellness Partnerships

- Continued establishing and expanding relationships with key health and wellness groups to broaden dairy's appeal and highlight dairy's role in advancing health for all Americans.

Results

- Strategic partnership with Women, Infants & Children (WIC) reached 6.6 million WIC moms with information on the health benefits of dairy, especially in the first 1,000 days, including recipes and highlighting the cultural relevancy of dairy and lactose free options.

Activate as One Dairy Industry

Dairy's Role in the First 1,000 Days

- Used dairy-industry wide approach to engage early parents and health & wellness thought leaders around the vital role dairy foods play in maternal and childhood health.

Results

- 13 dairy checkoff states and regional organizations activated alongside national efforts from Undeniably Dairy, National Dairy Council and USDEC, securing more than 10 million total impressions.
- More than 60,000 pediatric care specialists were reached across the country.

Advance Support for U.S. Dairy's Environmental Progress

Earth Day

- Created "Dairy Diaries" video series starring Vanessa Bayer, in collaboration with MilkPEP, available on Roku and filmed at Beck Farms in Tomkins County, New York.
- Leveraged successful "See Dairy Differently" and "A Farmer is More Than a Farmer" content during Earth Month 2024.

Results

- "Dairy Diaries" was the most-viewed short form branded series on Roku to date. Viewers had a 23% increase in belief that dairy farming is environmentally friendly (pre-viewing vs. post), and 3 in 5 viewers said the series increased their respect for dairy farmers.

See Dairy Differently

- Encouraged thought leaders and consumers to reconsider dairy's role with new media partnerships and advertising channels under "See Dairy Differently" thematic.

- Brought dairy's sustainability and nutrition story to life by combining powerful advertising creative with media buys in high-profile outlets including USA Today, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Forbes, Good Housekeeping and Wired.

Results

- Garnered 37 million impressions and 460,000 clicks to USDairy.com via six pieces of content.

Exports

FOODSERVICE: Partner with U.S. foodservice companies to drive menu and marketing innovation using U.S. cheese.

How It Worked

- Our foodservice partnerships with #1 and #2 pizza brands continue to grow U.S. cheese volume in Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia and MENA (Middle East North Africa). Due to our partnership influence, Pizza Hut Japan will focus on cheese as a key taste and quality perception driver and beginning in October all pizzas used 30% more cheese.
- Additionally, our product research team, engaging with the Dairy Research Center Network, in alignment with the menu development team at Pizza Hut Japan developed a US Gouda for testing in 40 key stores in this market. Proving our international pizza partnerships benefit more than just U.S. mozzarella.
- Also in Japan, Domino's Pizza launched the Volcano Pizza, which outperformed forecast, selling out in four weeks (planned for three-month Limited Time Offer (LTO)). This is a new platform, which will be brought back in regular intervals, including a well-received Halloween version in the fall.
- To increase cheese utilization on individual pizzas, Domino's added a double cheese upsell platform, allowing customers to double the cheese on their pizza when ordering. They've also introduced a line of pizzas with 50% more cheese on every pizza, in both Japan and Taiwan.
- Pizza Hut Indonesia launched its most successful LTO ever, The Cheese Overflow platform, which delivered a multidimensional cheese experience through both a cheese "pour" and a cheese "torch."
- Pizza Hut Indonesia launched Dip n Crunch, which surpassed sales forecast by 8% and became the second most successful LTO in Pizza Hut Indonesia history behind the Cheese Overflow, a successful launch from this partnership last year.

Results

- Launched (or relaunched) 10 new products and a dozen successful promotions.

GROWTH PLATFORMS: Identify and execute against future growth platforms and maximize overall impact

How It Worked

- International Enterprise Team, including USDEC, DMI and state and regional checkoff organizations, explored precompetitive innovation territories for US cheese in Japan for 2025.
- Leveraging resources across the federation to develop consumer-driven innovation approach to identify, validate and attract U.S. dairy suppliers to execute cheese innovation that can be successfully implemented across borders
- Identified nearly \$1 billion opportunity in Japan for U.S. cheese product innovation*
- Team tested concepts with consumers in Japan and the U.S. and began sharing the landscape of opportunities with U.S. dairy suppliers and manufacturers December.

*Innovation Opportunities for U.S. Cheese in Japan: Articulation and Volumetrics, DMI customer research, GlobalData March 2024

Results

- Currently executing pilot partnership opportunities in 2025, to prove out process/principle and replicate in other markets in 2026 and beyond.

Regional/South Dakota Dairy Promotion Highlights

Midwest Dairy developed the below objectives to drive focus in 2024-2026. The objectives reflect both business needs and foundational needs of the organization. The following objectives and strategies supply the direction for programming and investment priorities.

- Increase Dairy Sales
- Grow Trust in Dairy
- Advance Research in Dairy
- Create Dairy Checkoff Advocates
- Develop Farm and Community Leaders for Dairy

Increase Dairy Sales

Hy-Vee

- Midwest Dairy and Hy-Vee launched a cheese-focused tailgating campaign to elevate game day celebrations with versatile, vendor-sponsored cheese recipes across store departments.
- With U.S. cheese consumption at a record 42.3 pounds per person in 2023, the campaign tapped into growing demand through strategic promotions and regional vendor partnerships.
- The campaign centered on six crowd-pleasing recipes. These recipes included [Philly Cheesesteak Pull-Apart Bread](#), [Buffalo Bacon Blue Cheese Sliders](#), [Tailgate Breakfast Nachos](#), [Candied Bacon N Cheese Sliders](#), [Cottage Cheese Buffalo Chicken Dip](#), and [Tailgate Sliders](#).



Results

- Consumers were reached both in-store and online through a combination of on-site and off-site advertising strategies. The off-site advertising initiative extended Hy-Vee's influence across 14,000 publishers and over 10,000 websites during the one-month campaign.

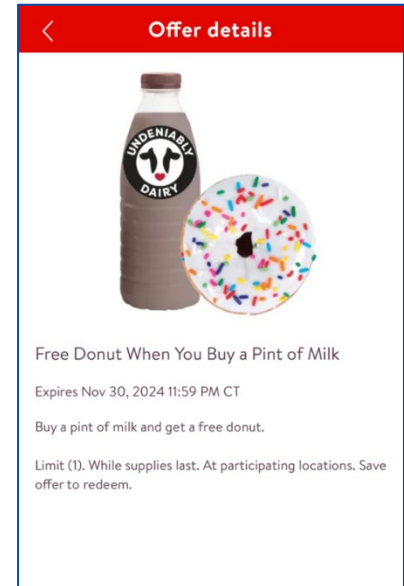
- Over two million consumers engaged with the campaign, delivering nearly 1.4 million incremental pounds of milk through cheese sales.

Casey's

- In November 2024, Midwest Dairy partnered with Casey's General Stores, Inc. to launch a promotion encouraging dairy consumption and enhance morning routines to more than 6.5 million Casey's online loyalty rewards members.
- This online offer provided customers with a free donut with the purchase of a pint of fresh milk.

Results

- Redemptions in 1,640 stores, resulting in over 3,500 additional pounds of milk sales and pleasing Casey's loyal customers with a delicious combination.



Fareway

- In March 2024, Midwest Dairy and Fareway Inc. launched the Dairy Strong campaign to promote high-protein dairy products aligned with fitness, wellness, and GLP-1 health trends.
- The campaign leveraged consumer research showing rising demand for protein, positioning dairy as a convenient and nutritious solution.
- Shoppers were engaged through protein-rich recipes like Cottage Cheese Cookie Dough, Protein Cottage Cheese Ice Cream, and Tzatziki yogurt-sauced Greek Gyros. The campaign highlighted retailer-selected, vendor-sponsored products such as the new Anderson Erickson Hi-Protein Milk, Danone Light & Fit Yogurt, Daisy Cottage Cheese, and Frigo String Cheese.



Results

- Web and email banner ads reached 1.37 million consumer email inboxes, generating 8,197 clicks.
- Two recipes were posted on Facebook, with the Protein Ice Cream post leading the way, garnering 53 engagements.
- On Instagram, four giveaways were held, with the top post earning 94 engagements and 36 entries.
- In-store video ads ran in 132 stores, reaching an estimated 4 million shoppers.
- The campaign generated 5.4 million campaign impressions and a 21% increase in unit sales across featured products. The campaign also led to more than 400,000 incremental pounds of milk sold.

Grow Trust in Dairy

Dairy and Conservation: A 5-course Conversation

- Midwest Dairy is growing trust by engaging with environmental thought leaders in South Dakota to highlight dairy's role in sustainability and food systems.
- In partnership with Tim Meagher, COO of Vanguard Hospitality and Friends of the Big Sioux River, and Paulsen Marketing, Midwest Dairy hosted "Dairy & Conservation: A 5-Course Conversation," a dinner event for 24 sustainability experts.
- The event featured dairy-centric dishes and table discussions led by farmers and industry leaders on topics like cow comfort, water quality, methane digesters, and the Net Zero Initiative.

Results

- Attendees came from diverse organizations, and Midwest Dairy plans to continue these collaborations to ensure dairy remains part of sustainability conversations.

Celebrating Earth Day: Dairy builds trust through sustainability partnerships in South Dakota at "Taste Local, Talk Sustainability" event and Earth Day River Clean-Up

- At the University of South Dakota, Midwest Dairy partnered with the Department of Sustainability & Environment, the Environmental Club, and Sodexo to host

“Taste Local, Talk Sustainability,” serving over 250 students locally sourced spinach dip made with Prairie Farms cream and cream cheese and Agropur Parmesan. The event featured conversations with dairy farmer Riley Boadwine about sustainability, animal care, and nutrition, and reached an additional 5,000 students through social media promotion by student leaders and partners.



- In Sioux Falls, Midwest Dairy participated in the Earth Day River Clean-Up with Friends of the Big Sioux River, featuring a cheese pairing station, local SDSU dairy ambassadors, and the debut of “Big Sioux Brew,” a beer brewed with purified river water.
- These events are part of Midwest Dairy’s broader efforts to engage with partners through ongoing educational initiatives, a sustainability-focused podcast featuring a local dairy farmer, and the distribution of cow pots—plantable pots made from composted manure—linking agriculture and conservation in classrooms and communities.

Partnership reaches local teachers at STEM Education Conference

- In 2024, Midwest Dairy partnered with the South Dakota Science Teaching Association (SDSTA) to create a virtual professional development program, highlighting dairy-funded STEM resources aligned with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and supporting teacher education and leadership.
- The partnership boosted SDSTA membership and led to a breakout session at the South Dakota STEM Education Conference, where about 20 teachers engaged with interactive labs and agriculture-based science resources.
- The conference session was co-led by SDSTA leadership, a local ag-based science teacher, and Midwest Dairy staff, reinforcing the quality and relevance of the materials.
- In June 2025, the partnership will continue with an in-person training for 25 local teachers at South Dakota State University, including a dairy farm tour, a visit to Bel Brands, and hands-on learning tied to real-world agricultural science.

Empowering sustainability thought leaders in South Dakota

- Midwest Dairy builds relationships with environmental thought leaders to share dairy’s sustainability story and encourage influential support for the industry.
- Through an ongoing partnership with the University of South Dakota’s (USD) Sustainability and Environment Program, Midwest Dairy and local dairy farmer

Cole Hoyer engaged over 90 students and faculty in a sustainability course, highlighting real-world dairy practices and offering local cheese samples.

- Midwest Dairy is collaborating with USD's Environmental Club and Sodexo for the university's 2025 Earth Day Fair, featuring dairy and plant-based recipes with a "know your farmer" theme to promote local sourcing and sustainability.
- The DAIRY research project, now in its third year, continues to study Gen Z environmental beliefs within ESS programs at USD, with new findings expected in May.
- At the Big Sioux Stewardship Summit, Midwest Dairy and Boadwine Dairy hosted farm tours and participated in sustainability panels, reaching over 100 attendees from academia, industry, and the community to discuss dairy's role in regenerative agriculture and environmental stewardship.

Advance Research in Dairy

Midwest Dairy Foods Research Center (MDFRC)

- MDFRC is a collaborative effort between dairy farmers and the University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, South Dakota State University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Kansas State University, and the University of Missouri. This collaborative is focused on delivering research and education that benefit consumers and fuels a strong market for Midwest dairy.
- In 2024, the MDFRC funded the following research projects:

Project Title	PI	University
Functional modification of high protein ingredients for targeted applications	Jay Amamcharla	UMN
Production of low-cost GOS from whey permeate streams	Maneesha Mohan	SDSU
Enhancing the bio-preservative/bio-protective behavior of NSLAB using soluble fibers as a prebiotic during cheddar cheese ripening to prevent spoilage (Phase II)	Sanjeev Anand	SDSU
Novel strategies to control oxidized flavor in dairy powders	Gary Reineccius	U of MN
Cow water for potable and processing use	Prafulla Salunke	SDSU
Tuning the texture of emulsions stabilized by dairy protein-based ingredients	Jeab Vardhanabhuti	University of Missouri

- MDFRC holds its annual meeting each summer. This meeting is an open invitation to Operational Advisory Committee members, faculty, and students to evaluate and score research proposals for potential funding in the next funding cycle.

Results

- The research funded is intended to advance the industry through solutions, insights, and innovation. In 2025, four projects were selected to be funded.
 - Control of Fungal Growth to Extend Shelf Life of Cheddar and Mozzarella Cheese: Impact of Packaging Film coated with Natural Antifungal Compounds (Iowa State University)
 - Development of biosensors for calcium, sodium, and potassium measurement (South Dakota State University)
 - Develop and validate rapid and alternative methods for scorched particles in dairy powders (University of Minnesota)
 - Physical and chemical inhibition of color formation in permeate powders (University of Minnesota)

Create Dairy Checkoff Advocates

Creating checkoff advocates at the South Dakota joint annual meeting

- South Dakota dairy farmers and industry leaders gathered in Brookings on February 6, 2025, for the joint annual meeting of the Midwest Dairy South Dakota Division, which included board elections and district leadership updates.
- Attendees engaged with Midwest Dairy CEO Corey Scott and participated in a panel discussion with leaders from corn, soybean, and pork industries to explore shared strategies for consumer outreach.
- The event also introduced the 2025 South Dakota Dairy Ambassadors—five students from South Dakota State University selected to promote dairy and develop leadership skills.

Develop Farm and Community Leaders for Dairy

South Dakota Scholarships

- Midwest Dairy awarded scholarships for the 2024–2025 academic year to high school and college students demonstrating leadership in their schools, communities, and the dairy industry.

- Applicants identified key challenges facing the dairy industry and explained how their career goals aim to address those issues.
- Six students attending South Dakota State University received 2025 scholarships: Brianna Moss, Ellary Jacoby, Josephine Sutherland, Makenna Skiff, Sam Czech, and Jonaton Hernandez.