



United Dairy Industry of Michigan

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Michigan Dairy Farmers are Focused on Consumer Connections

United Dairy Industry of Michigan 2022 Annual Meeting highlighted the successful return to in-person events, the exciting evolution of digital and social platforms and expanding partnerships.

OKEMOS, Mich. [March 25, 2022] – Last year’s return to in-person promotional events was a welcome return to normalcy for Michiganders. For United Dairy Industry of Michigan (UDIM), it also meant launching creative efforts combining the lessons learned from virtual connections with big, new ideas to reach consumers and future consumers of dairy foods.

“UDIM continues to fine-tune efforts to meet dairy consumers where they live and in ways they prefer to connect,” says Corby Werth, UDIM President. “We’ve adapted our promotion of farming practices and dairy foods using social media and digital platforms, digging deeper into virtual connections, especially with future milk drinkers.”

Dairy farmers and industry leaders met earlier this month, to share highlights from 2021 dairy promotion activities on state, local and national levels. This meeting marked the Dairy Council of Michigan’s 93rd Annual Meeting and the American Dairy Association of Michigan’s 79th Annual Meeting.

Here are a few ways dairy farmers’ checkoff investments work on behalf of Michigan farm families to strengthen consumer trust in farms and dairy foods.

Record-setting dairy exports

2021 was the most successful year in the history of U.S. dairy exports, with records set for both value and volume. Year-end export data showed total sales rose 18% over the previous year to a record \$7.75 billion. Export volume climbed 10% higher, a significant accomplishment considering 2020 also was a record-setting year

“The world needs your dairy products, and you need the world,” Krysta Harden, President and CEO, U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC), noted in her keynote address. “I’m excited about the future of dairy exports.”

She cites booming cheese demand, growing global demand for animal proteins and lowered milk production from key competitors as prime growth opportunities. “I am optimistic we will continue to make progress in these areas, and we look for persistent growth in Mexico, the Americas and

Southeast Asia,” she says. “We need to listen to our customers, be adaptive with our products and continue to seek market diversification. Exports can be and should be part of our strong future.”

Reaching consumers

Closer to home, UDIM partners offered insights into dairy promotion activities.

- Dairy influencers Kip Siegler, Stef Turner, Alycia Burch and Glenn Packard are diverse in background and target audience. Still, all are passionate about dairy and emphasize the importance of being authentic when connecting on social media. All say dairy farmers and others who engage on behalf of dairy must “be real and be yourself” if you want consumers and potential consumers to listen to your message.
- Metrics shared by Detroit Pistons corporate leadership Brenden Mallette and Elizabeth Zouzal demonstrate the effectiveness of pairing UDIM’s dairy messaging with sports promotions to “leverage the Piston’s megaphone to reach more people.” Combining social media, in-arena messaging, player spokesperson Saddiq Bey and community events are exponentially amplifying Milk Means More and ‘You’re Gonna Need Milk for That’ brand awareness to key generational and diverse audiences.

Leadership transition

Passing her leadership torch, outgoing UDIM CEO Sharon Toth shared how far dairy promotion advanced over her 30-year career.

From simply talking about calcium for bone health to promoting dairy’s wellness in ways and on platforms that weren’t even imagined three decades ago, dairy communications have significantly changed. “By trying new things, communicating in diverse ways and collaborating with partners, we’ve brought more dairy to more people to make their lives better,” she says.

Look for incoming UDIM CEO Dwyer Williams to “create a culture of curiosity and entrepreneurial spirit” among the checkoff team, partners and Michigan farmers. “Good ideas come from anywhere,” she says. “I’m excited to collaborate with our farmer founders, as well as incorporating ideas from national, regional and other state programs to the benefit of Michigan dairy farmers.”

To learn more about UDIM's efforts to build sales and grow trust in dairy foods, visit www.milkmeansmore.org or call the office at 517-349-8923.

About the United Dairy Industry of Michigan

The United Dairy Industry of Michigan (UDIM) is dedicated to serving Michigan’s hard-working dairy farm families and promoting Michigan’s locally produced dairy products. UDIM is the umbrella organization for the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council of Michigan. These non-profit organizations provide dairy product promotion and nutrition education services on behalf of their funding members.

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