

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Dairy Industry of Michigan

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Increasing Michigan's Access to Dairy Nutrition

The first-ever Dairy Nourishes Michigan Symposium focused on solutions to increase nutrition security for consumers across the state.

OKEMOS, Mich. [Nov. 16, 2023] – This fall, United Dairy Industry of Michigan (UDIM), supported by the Food Bank Council of Michigan, hosted the first-ever Dairy Nourishes Michigan Symposium in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The innovative event brought together food banks, processors and partners who support nutrition security in Michigan to network and collaborate on innovative ideas and solutions that will increase access to the essential nutrients and protein provided by dairy foods. And learn more about the state's dairy industry and value chain.

For instance, a trip to Myers Dairy Farm, LLC, in Scotts, Michigan, helped attendees see first-hand how dairy farmers work to provide safe, healthy dairy foods for consumers while caring for their land and animals.

"We were excited and honored to host the tour and show so many how our farm and other farms in Michigan are dedicated to our mission of caring for our cows, families and farms," says dairy owner Dawn Myers.

"Our visit to Myers Dairy Farm really reinforced the commitment our Michigan dairy farmers have to their work and to the sustainability they build into their business," says Julie Beamer, Chief Operating Officer at Gleaners Community Food Bank. "Recycling of water resources, seeing that the entire corn crop is being utilized, and thinking about cows as metabolic marvels really proves the absolute commitment and partnership dairy farmers have to this work."

The symposium also included tours of a Prairie Farms Dairy processing plant and a Michigan food bank, as well as presentations, collaborative learning and planning, and group activities. Attendees explored the links in the dairy supply chain, how to commit to a dairy program and gained a deeper understanding of resources needed and solutions for overcoming barriers and challenges standing in the way of nutrition security in Michigan communities.

"It was amazing to bring our Michigan food banks and key dairy stakeholders together in one room to engage and discuss such important dairy industry topics," says Cortney Freeland, UDIM Vice President of Strategic Partnerships. "Every attendee left with a new appreciation for our Michigan

dairy farmers, the dairy industry as a whole, and the importance of dairy product accessibility for our Michigan neighbors.”

“Congrats to the Milk Means More team for truly elevating the conversation. The magic happens here, locally, regionally,” says Jerod Matthews, Senior Director of Commodity Foods at Feeding America.

“Events like this are the real answer to moving this work forward. Being able to have quick answers in the room that may have otherwise taken weeks. It is encouraging to see the collaboration and positive energy in each participant.”

The opportunity to showcase dairy’s vital role in food security solutions resonates throughout the dairy community.

“Michigan dairy farmers, through UDIM partnerships and activities with food banks, food pantries, and other key organizations, help deliver essential nutrition to people throughout the state,” says Brian DeMann, owner of Clearview Dairy Farm in Martin, Michigan and UDIM Board Member. “Food security is critical to everyone, and dairy farmers play an essential role in helping serve our neighbors and communities, ensuring they have the healthy dairy foods they need. Events like this help us make even more connections to continue this indispensable work.”

“I am happy to have met so many new faces and had the opportunity to foster new relationships,” says Elly Starks Prairie Farms Dairy Senior Sales Administrator. “I look forward to continuing to build on this momentum and see what we are going to work on next.”

To learn more about UDIM and how it’s reaching the next generation of consumers, visit milkmeansmore.org

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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Download the release.

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Captions:

UDIM Dairy Nourishes farm tour group photo.jpg: *Attendees of the Dairy Nourishes Michigan Symposium visited Myers Dairy Farm, Scotts, Michigan, to learn how farmers care for their animals and resources.*

UDIM Dairy Nourishes farm tour feed commodities.jpg: *Dairy farmer Dawn Myers shares how dairy cattle feed ingredients are stored to attendees of the Dairy Nourishes Michigan Symposium.*

UDIM Dairy Nourishes farm tour.jpg: *Dairy farmer Dawn Myers shares how the farm cares for calves with attendees of the Dairy Nourishes Michigan Symposium this fall.*

UDIM Dairy Nourishes_dairy farmer Brian DeMann.jpg: *Dairy farmer and UDIM Board Member Brian DeMann, Martin, Michigan, shared dairy farmer's commitment to increasing nutrition security throughout the state with attendees of the Dairy Nourishes Michigan Symposium.*