

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Dairy Industry of Michigan

CONTACT: Jolene Griffin, Vice President of Industry Relations

Jolene@MilkMeansMore.org, 224-567-1894

High-res images and video for download: bit.ly/4ayJfUt



United Dairy Industry of Michigan

UDIM Celebrated Partnerships at 2024 Annual Meeting

Record attendance for yearly dairy promotion recap and business meeting.

OKEMOS, Mich. [March 28, 2024] – Dairy promotion partnerships were in the spotlight at the recent United Dairy Industry of Michigan (UDIM) Annual Meeting, illustrating how these important relationships help extend the story of dairy. [Check out this highlight video](#) for a quick peek at the event.

This year's meeting drew record attendance, offering farmers, dairy industry allies and UDIM staff opportunities to mingle and share how the checkoff works to support the collective dairy industry while elevating dairy sales and consumer nutrition.

"From the Detroit Lions to [university dietitian scholarships](#) and other programs, collaboration with the national dairy checkoff, dairy-focused curriculums and much more, these partnerships help the UDIM team share dairy's message far and wide," says Melissa Gerharter, UDIM CEO. "Our influence increases exponentially through their voices and allows us to be nimble in how we reach consumers. It's an exciting time for dairy promotion."

Programs in action

Corby Werth, UDIM President and dairy farmer from Alpena, Michigan, notes, "I had the chance to interact with the science teachers who attended the first immersive dairy event to learn how Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) are essential parts of our farms. It was incredible to see them get excited about the things we take for granted and learn about all the opportunities and benefits our industry has to offer."

- The [STEM program](#) is recruiting teachers for another session this summer and a new dairy-based curriculum will soon be available to educators across the country. Michigan dairy farmers make a difference in the lives of consumers through community relations efforts, including a new food pantry at the Detroit Lions Academy which directly provides dairy foods to more than 100 food-insecure families. Providing dairy foods for breakfast has also had a huge impact on student test scores and overall educational performance.
- Dairy's fueling power has been amplified by UDIM's partnership with the University of Michigan, which includes a dietician fellowship. This relationship has opened doors to

the sharing power of student athletes to expand dairy's message while providing support for individual – and team – health and wellness. Other university partnerships help share dairy's benefits to these audiences, as well.

- UDIM is also expanding outreach to pediatrician offices, providing key information about dairy foods to share with patients and parents in greater Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids and Lansing.

“Our goal with each of our programs and partnerships is to be the lighter to start the fire and keep these efforts burning brightly on behalf of dairy farmers,” says Gerharter. “We are dedicated to supporting the nutritional and educational needs of consumers while wisely and efficiently using dairy farmer investments. We are committed to our communities, steadfast in our mission of health and wellness and we want consumers and our partners to know dairy farmers are behind them.”

Reaching consumers where they live online is another point of emphasis for the dairy checkoff from local and national perspectives.

For instance, eCommerce has gained significant traction, with many Americans purchasing some, if not most, of their groceries online. As online orders continue to climb, understanding and activating along the path to purchase will need to remain a priority. It will be important that the industry manage a consistent consumer experience to support sales onsite and offsite, notes Beau Hayden, Dairy Management Inc., Vice President of Strategic Intelligence.

According to national dairy checkoff data, dairy is a bright spot, leading the perishable category. The chart below shows the magnitude of ecommerce and what it means to the dairy industry.



Board leadership

The UDIM Board of Directors also held officer elections following the general session. Reelected to the leadership team are:

- President – Corby Werth, dairy farmer from Alpena, Michigan
- Vice President – Scott Lamb, dairy farmer from Jeddo, Michigan
- Treasurer – Burke Larsen, dairy farmer from Scottville, Michigan

“It’s my honor to lead this organization to help promote dairy foods and dairy farms while supporting sales throughout Michigan and beyond,” says Werth.

To learn more about UDIM, 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.

###

Download the release.

High-res images and video for download: bit.ly/4ayJfUt

Captions:

UDIM_Corby Werth.jpg: *Corby Werth was reelected president of UDIM at the recent Annual Meeting held in Lansing, Michigan.*

UDIM_Sizzlereel: *Watch the highlights from the 2024 UDIM Annual Meeting.*

UDIM_Ecommerce: *Dairy is an important ecommerce category. According to data from the dairy checkoff, dairy is the second largest department of online grocery stores.*