

ISDA NEWS

President's Report

Building Momentum for Future Success



Lee Maassen
ISDA Board President

Hope you all had a safe and bountiful harvest. It's been quite a year with a lot of rainfall this spring to a very dry fall harvest season. May this find you in a time of looking back over this past year and saying we sure have been blessed again in 2024.

I want to say congratulations to Mariah Busta on her baby boy. I am looking forward to her return next month. We truly miss you and hope all things are well with your family. Amie Bill did a great job while you were on maternity leave, but looking forward to a full team effort again. Amie did a great job with Melissa

Young at the Iowa State Fair to make it a great success. We learned a lot and have many ideas on how make it a better dairy bar for the future. Always one of the go-to spots for the fair goers to enjoy the best ice cream treats available.

Looking back over the year we have had many challenges and especially learning how to deal with HPAI in our dairy industry. It was an unprecedented time. We will make history as dairymen and as an organization. Our industry is implementing many security measures to slow down the spread of the virus. I want to say a big thank you to all our staff. Thank you for all the extra communication it took to stay on top of this, with the media, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and the team at Iowa State University. Through all of this, we learned more

continued on page 2 →

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President's Report (cont.)

To all dairymen, be sure to amend your taxes. This legislation is retroactive to 2023.

You can claim a refund for all the cull cows you sold off the farm in 2023. This will prove to be a lucrative update as most of you may earn a refund from the Iowa Department of Revenue.

efficient ways to manage this virus.

As dairy farmers, we are more prepared for the next time the virus shows up as I'm sure it will. We will continue to be vigilant and intensify our bio security measures and testing to do our part in slowing down the spread of this virus. I want to say thank you to all our fellow dairymen in enacting the protocols set forth by your veterinarian. I am encouraged by the rapid decrease in positive cases, I would like to think that it is in part due to the dairy industry's quick response. Many questions still need to be answered. However, with proven bio security measures, our producers can curtail the spread of H5N1. We will continue to build on our experiences.

On the policy front, we had a great response from our legislature this year in passing the HF 2649 Farm Capital Exclusions. Thanks to Jill Altringer and Mariah Busta for working with this legislation. Thank you to all the board members that represented ISDA at the state capital this year. To all dairymen, be sure to amend your taxes. This legislation is

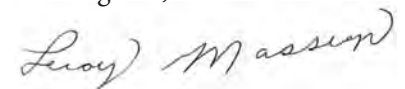
retroactive to 2023. You can claim a refund for all the cull cows you sold off the farm in 2023. This will prove to be a lucrative update as most of you may earn a refund from the Iowa Department of Revenue.

We will keep up the pace as ISDA continues to recruit more processing in Iowa. Our goal is to have strong markets for the products made right here at home. We see a bright future ahead for Iowa.

If there are any other legislative concerns or requests for 2025, please let us know. We are the voice for you in Des Moines within the political arena to get our needs heard!

I wish you the best for the rest of 2024. Thanks again to all the dairy producers and their families. Thank you to our staff at ISDA for all you do. We are proud to be a part of one of the greatest industries in our state of Iowa. The Iowa State Dairy Association is here for you!

Best regards,



Lee Maassen
ISDA President

Associate Director's Report

Looking Back at a Year of Success and Challenges



Hello from the desk of Iowa State Dairy Association staff! The year 2024 has proven to be eventful as progress on the dairy front

continues to be made. There have been some challenges, but all in all, we have come out stronger on the other side. The Iowa State Dairy Association (ISDA) will continue to lobby and promote the Iowa dairy industry as we wrap up the year and the new year unfolds.

To begin, in August, Mariah Busta and her family welcomed a new baby boy. Congratulations, Mariah! We look forward to your return to the office.

Most farmers are nearing the end of their harvests, and there have been positive reports regarding silage and crop yields this year. We continue to keep the farmers in Northwest Iowa in our thoughts and prayers as they faced record rainfall and historic flooding in late June. An extensive clean-up effort is still underway in this area of our state.

Reflecting on this past year, June was an exciting month for promoting dairy. As many know, June is Dairy Month, and the ISDA truly excelled in celebrating this annual event. We extend our gratitude to Governor Reynolds and her team for attending the Iowa Dairy Celebration on June 19, 2024. During this event, Governor Reynolds signed the proclamation designating June as Iowa's Dairy Month. The celebration took place

on the Iowa State University (ISU) campus, where attendees enjoyed ice cream from the ISU Creamery and shared stories about dairy promotion and fellowship.

Also worth noting, the 90th Iowa General Assembly ended in the early hours of April 20, 2024. A few bills of interest include:

- **HF 2649 Farm Capital Exclusions-** The Capital Gains exclusion was removed in the 2018 income tax bill but didn't take effect until 2023. Therefore, farmers were just starting to see the impact of the loss. The bill was written to return the exclusion to the tax law; thus, it excludes the net capital gain from the sale of horses or cattle if held for breeding, sporting, draft, or dairy purposes for more than 2 years if the owner received farming income of 50% of gross income. Allows other breeding livestock to be excluded after a year, which is retroactive to 2023.

- **SF2421 Agriculture & Natural Resource Appropriations-** The bill appropriated \$46M, a \$2.4M increase over last year. Summarizing the areas of interest from the detailed information below, the Dairy Innovation Fund was appropriated \$750,000, and the Butchery Innovation was moved to IDALS and funded \$249,695 (there is a carry-over in the funds from last year that wasn't awarded through grants). Both programs will now be housed under Choose Iowa in IDALS but will have individual rules for the programs.

As with state legislation, ISDA has been monitoring the federal government and movement in the Farm Bill. One big topic worth

following is the Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO). The Dairy Margin Coverage program is also being reviewed and revised. According to economists, "milk production remains an integral piece of agricultural production in the United States, accounting for nearly 10 percent (\$42 billion) of all agricultural receipts in 2021 (not including the beef value of dairy animals)."

And finally, I would be remiss if I did not address the effects of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) in our dairy herds. This virus came to the forefront in March of this year. The Iowa State Veterinary Diagnostic Lab was instrumental in confirming the virus in milk samples. For most of this year, ISDA staff have been working with the state's agricultural leaders to ensure we are doing our due diligence to stop the spread of the virus. ISDA has fielded questions from media and consumer groups in hopes of educating people that pasteurized milk is still a safe and secure food source. ISDA was also present during the 2024 Iowa State Fair to answer questions and address concerns from fairgoers.

The Iowa State Dairy Association thanks you for your continued service to Iowa's dairy industry. We are committed to its growth and well-being as we enter 2025.

*Amie Bill, Associate Director
Iowa State Dairy Association*

Cozy Cow Lounge Makes a Splash in Des Moines

Event Highlights the Crucial Link Between Dairy Farmers and the Community

In an exciting fusion of agriculture and urban culture, the Cozy Cow Lounge made its debut at the Skate DSM Streetstyle Collective in Des Moines. The pop-up lounge highlighted the importance of responsibly produced dairy while promoting it as a vital refueling option for new athletes. Between in person attendance and social marketing, the partnership created over 15,000 impressions.

The Cozy Cow Lounge transformed a corner of the bustling skate park into an inviting space where attendees could learn about dairy farming practices and the nutritional benefits of dairy products. Ambassadors and

Midwest Dairy staff were on hand to engage with visitors, sharing insights on sustainable farming methods, animal welfare, and the journey of milk from farm to table.

Athletes at the Skate DSM event took advantage of the lounge, where they were treated to samples of delicious chocolate milk. Many expressed their appreciation for the protein and energy boost these dairy products provide, essential for their active lifestyles.

The Cozy Cow Lounge also featured interactive displays and educational materials, illustrating how modern dairy farms are reducing their environmental impact while

maintaining high standards of quality and safety. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussions about their concerns and interests related to food production.

As the event wrapped up, the Cozy Cow Lounge left a lasting impression on attendees, highlighting the crucial link between dairy farmers and the community. By promoting responsible dairy production and its role in supporting active lifestyles, the initiative not only celebrated agriculture but ensured that the message of sustainable dairy production resonates far beyond the skate park.

www.vitewall.com

“One of our 2024 sponsors is **ViteWall Plastic Wall Systems** of Orlando, Florida. ViteWall are a fast indoor/outdoor plastic wall system that replaces mold-prone drywall and glass-board. According to Kevin of Moeller’s Dairy in Ridgeway IA, “When people see it, you’ll get sales. ViteWall is very durable!”

In addition to the white panels at Moeller’s Dairy, the company manufactures an electricity-saving version with a white/foil radiant barrier for indoor irrigation.

You can get a free sample at www.vitewall.com. The Owner is John D. Smith and the Florida company can be reached at 407-423-5959. The company appeared on the 100th Episode of **ABC’s Shark Tank** in 2014.”



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2024: The Year of “Making WIDA Great Again”

This past year has been termed a rebuilding year for the Western Iowa Dairy Alliance, filled with both exciting progress and unique challenges. While we faced some obstacles—like the unfortunate cancellation of our Open House—we’ve also experienced numerous highlights that demonstrate the resilience and strength of our dairy community.

One of our key focuses has been engaging our community through educational events and community outreach. From our successful Dairy Day at the Clay County Fair, several June Dairy month initiatives, to various product donations, we’ve continued to build relationships and raise awareness about the importance of dairy in Iowa.

Even though we were unable to host our annual Open House due to the Bird Flu, we did enjoy putting together an initiative with our local NW IA FFA chapters,



‘Fuel the Harvest.’ We were able to provide dairy product to several FFA chapters in their ‘Feed the Farmer’ meals during harvest. We enjoyed making this connection and trying something new.

While there is still room to grow, we feel that we were able to connect with dairy producers this year at a higher level than years past. A memorable moment was our summer gathering at Sioux Center Siouxnami, where producers came together to share experiences and plan for the future. These interactions have inspired us to continue finding ways to provide producers with opportunities for succession planning, business management, and community engagement.

As we look toward the upcoming year, we are excited about what’s on the horizon. We are currently

planning to purchase a traveling trailer to cut costs on storage while allowing us to bring dairy education to more places. Additionally, we are exploring new ways to support and grow the dairy industry in Northwest Iowa, from potential dairy and milk judging events for local 4-H and FFA chapters to increasing producer involvement through workshops and events.

We’re also eager to expand our outreach efforts, providing more resources and visibility to our producers and working toward our goal of transitioning farms to new technologies, like robotic milking systems, to improve efficiency and productivity.

Thank you to all of our members, supporters, and the entire dairy community for making this year one of growth and resilience. Together, we look forward to building an even stronger year ahead for the dairy industry in Western Iowa!



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Choose Iowa Dairy Innovation Grants

Grants aim to increase on-farm dairy processing and labor saving technology

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig today announced the availability of Choose Iowa Dairy Innovation Grants, and welcomed grant applications for projects that will increase on-farm dairy processing, reduce farm labor costs, and expand the availability of Iowa dairy products for consumers. The grant is administered by the Choose Iowa Program within the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

“By supporting Iowa dairy farms with innovative technologies that enhance production and processing, we are increasing the availability of locally produced dairy products for Iowa consumers. These competitive cost-share grants received strong interest during their first year of availability, and we once again want to identify and award the most innovative and creative dairy projects,” said Secretary Naig. “Choose Iowa is all about connecting consumers with Iowa-grown, raised, and made products, and these grants will ultimately lead to new markets for farmers, expanded choices for consumers, and increased economic activity in our rural communities.”

Now in its second year of funding, the program has \$750,000 allocated for matching awards up to \$100,000 per project. In the first year of the grant, Choose Iowa received requests totaling more than \$2.6 million from 50 applications, a figure that is more than three times the available funding. Choose Iowa awarded 20 grants, which leveraged an overall total investment of more than \$2.2 million.

“The Iowa State Dairy Association



(ISDA) is encouraging Iowa dairy farmers to learn more about the Dairy Innovation Grant program. This grant program supports the Iowa dairy industry by promoting innovation, whether through dairy processing or implementing labor-reducing technologies on the farm. It also aims to provide Iowa consumers with more options to support local dairy,” said the Iowa State Dairy Association on behalf of its membership. “Last year, we saw an overwhelming number of applicants who used this funding to expand their farm operations and make necessary updates. Farmers appreciate funding like this, and ISDA is always advocating for grant programs like this one and pushing for more funding to help more Iowa farmers seize opportunities.”

The cost-share grants could, for example, help dairies invest in pasteurization equipment, processing vats, packaging and labeling products, robots, health monitoring, automated feeding systems or cleaning assistance. The program funds are not eligible to cover start-up costs,

advertising, public relations, salary/benefits/wages, existing debt or any expenses incurred prior to awarding the grant.

The legislative intent of the grant is to assist smaller dairies and farmers. Successful applicants must be located in Iowa, have fewer than 50 employees, and be in good standing with pertinent regulatory agencies. Only dairies permitted and inspected by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship are eligible.

Full details about the cost-share grant program, including financial matching requirements as well as the application, eligibility and scoring criteria are available on the Choose Iowa website. Applications should be submitted through the online portal on the Choose Iowa website and are due by 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 27. Grant recipients will be announced in March 2025. Questions about the Choose Iowa Dairy Innovation Fund Grant Program may be directed to Choose Iowa at chooseiowagrants@iowaagriculture.gov.

Boelen Family Honored with Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig presented the Boelen Family from Poweshiek County with the Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award during an event held on May 31st at the Brooklyn Ruritan Building in Brooklyn.

“Even though the Boelens are still relatively new to Iowa and the United States, they have followed a similar pattern of generations of Iowa farm families who chased their dreams, found fertile soil, settled in Iowa, and established themselves as involved members of their community,” said Secretary Naig. “Not only do the Boelens excel on their farm by taking good care of their cattle and land, but their community contributions and education efforts exemplify what it means to be a good farm neighbor”

Established in 2009 by Jan and Dorine Boelen, Bear Creek Dairy also includes son Joris and daughter-in-law Katherine Boelen, as well as son Teun and daughter-in-law Jennifer Boelen. Other family members include Dorine’s father Rens Kouwenberg, daughter Dieuwertje Boelen and fiancé Johnny Phillip, son Geert Boelen and family, and son Hessel Boelen. Jan and Dorine have four grandchildren: James, Joanna, Kate and Cassidy.

Before starting Bear Creek Dairy, Jan and Dorine owned a 160-head dairy in the Netherlands. In 2009, they embarked on a journey to move their family to America to pursue a more sustainable life. The family settled in Poweshiek County, and immediately started building a new life in Iowa. When they purchased

the farm, it included 234 milk cows. Over time, with the goal of making it a generational success, they have made additions to expand the operation. Today, the farm includes approximately 4,000 cattle, including 2,000 Jersey and Holstein crossbred cows that are milked three times per day. In addition to the work of family members, the farm’s 20 employees help keep the operation running efficiently as they milk for 23 hours per day. The farm grows corn for silage, soybeans, and utilizes rye as a cover crop, which is seeded at the end of corn chopping season and also provides feed for the cattle.

In order to produce high quality Grade A milk, which is sold to Prairie Farms, the Boelens believe strongly in ensuring a high standard of care for their cattle. The family uses innovative technologies to track health, fertility, nutrition and production. They take pride

in paying close attention to detail, including regular veterinary visits, professional hoof trimming and foot baths, and incorporating sprinklers and an advanced ventilation system for cow comfort.

Ever since they moved to Brooklyn, the Boelens have worked to put down deep roots in the community. They host farm tours, educational outreach programs, Clover Kids 4-H presentations, and have an annual drive-thru event on the farm every spring to help connect consumers to agriculture. They are active participants in local events such as the Brooklyn Flag Festival, community parades, Grinnell Lions Club Ag Day, Montezuma Freedom Fest, and trunk-or-treat Halloween events at Diamond Lake and St. Johns Lutheran Church. Various members of the family are active in both the Poweshiek County Farm Bureau and Farm Bureau Federation.



Bear Creek Dairy was honored with the Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award at a ceremony held at the Brooklyn Ruritan Building in Brooklyn.

Why Should I Care About MBW?

By Dr. Gail Carpenter, State Dairy Extension Specialist

Many people in the dairy industry know that when measuring and managing heifer growth and performance, we make recommendations for a herd based on their body weight as a percent of mature body weight (MBW). For a refresher on what these benchmarks are, see Table 1. But MBW is also a critical measurement for dairy farms for less apparent reasons!

What is MBW?

MBW is the body weight that an animal will be once she is done growing. We use this metric for management recommendations and balancing rations as an average of the herd. We collect this measurement on third- and fourth-lactation cows in their mid-lactation and are relatively healthy, i.e., not listed as cull cows or do-not-breed (DNB).

Why is MBW Important?

MBW is a critical measurement for reasons that may need to be recognized by most dairy producers or even their nutritionists. Consider two heifers that both weigh 600 lb. They are similar in body weight, breed, and age, so it may seem like they should have the same nutritional requirements. However, if they have different MBW (e.g. if one of them has a 1,400-lb MBW vs. the other has

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY Extension and Outreach

a 1,800-lb MBW), this will impact their requirements for growth. This is because body composition changes as animals approach maturity.

As an animal gets closer to maturity and her MBW, it is easier for her to put on fat instead of protein. Therefore, a 600-lb heifer with a 1400-lb MBW will be more likely to put on fat and body condition than a 600-lb heifer with an 1800-lb MBW. As a result, rations need to be balanced on the correct MBW, or else this can result in over-conditioned heifers.

How Do I Measure MBW?

There are several methods of collecting MBW.

The gold standard of weight data collection is individual body weights on a scale. A scale can be a valuable investment on your dairy farm because of the beneficial information you acquire. However, this may only be practical for some farms, depending on facility restrictions and how often you may use the scale.

Body weight tapes may be a valuable and low-cost tool for your dairy. While weight tapes do not have the same accuracy as scales, this should be balanced out if you collect weights on enough animals. It is essential to ensure that the animal is standing with their head up when measuring with a weight tape to get the most accurate measurement. Be safe using this tool, especially when reaching under the animal to pass the tape from one side!

Instead of measuring individual cows with a scale or weight tape, another option is to load a group of cows onto a trailer and weigh the whole group using a truck scale.

Do not use cull cow weights to estimate mature body weights. Cull cows are usually either over- or under-conditioned compared to the rest of your herd or, for other reasons, are not representative of the cows that remain in your herd. Therefore, these weights should not represent the MBW of cows in your herd.

If you are interested in having a dairy specialist help you collect MBW in your herd or have other questions about this topic, contact us! You can send us an email at dairyextension@iastate.edu.

| Age | Target |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Birth to weaning | Double body weight |
| Puberty | 45% of mature body weight |
| Breeding & pregnancy | 55-60% of mature body weight ~2.75-3.25 BCS |
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Make Plans to Attend Santa on the Farm

Santa will be coming to town, or should we say to the farm! Join the Northeast Iowa Dairy & Agriculture Foundation for Santa on the Farm, Friday, Dec. 13.

Visitors will be able to meet Santa from their vehicles. The drive-thru event will take visitors right through the farm's freestall barn to see a close-up view of the milking cows.



1527 Hwy. 150 South, Calmar, IA 52132
www.iowadairycenter.com

Cookies and milk will be served right to your vehicle. Visitors will also

receive a fun goody bag with dairy activities and more.

This family-friendly event is free to the public and donations are appreciated. The event will be weather permitting. For up-to-date information or questions, visit the Northeast Iowa Dairy & Agriculture Foundation's Facebook page.



ISU Creamery Connects with Iowa Communities

The Iowa State University Creamery has been incredibly busy with dairy production, outreach efforts, and student engagement over the past year. In January, we said goodbye to long-time director Dr. Stephanie Clark, as she moved on to new, exciting opportunities. Dr. Clark helped establish the Creamery in 2020, and we appreciate all her expertise, guidance, and dedication.

With that, we are excited to announce that we have hired a new director, Dr. Dylan Liu, to start in January 2025. Dr. Liu brings over 17 years of experience across the dairy industry, including commercial manufacturing processes, food safety, production management, and education. Most recently, he was a Lecturer in Food Science

and Sustainability at Federation University in Australia. We are looking forward to welcoming Dr. Liu and seeing how his experience can contribute to the Creamery's continued growth.

We've also been thrilled to connect with communities across Iowa this year. Through Iowa State Extension, we've hosted queso fresco workshops in Floyd, Dubuque, and Taylor counties, each bringing together around 20 participants eager to learn. At our on-campus location, we've welcomed over 2,500 visitors for tours, offering them an inside look at our mission, history, and current initiatives.

On campus, we have 22 student employees working in both our



retail and production areas. While many are food science students, we also have students from a variety of majors across campus, including biology, public relations, and entrepreneurship. To learn more about what we do, please visit www.creamery.iastate.edu.

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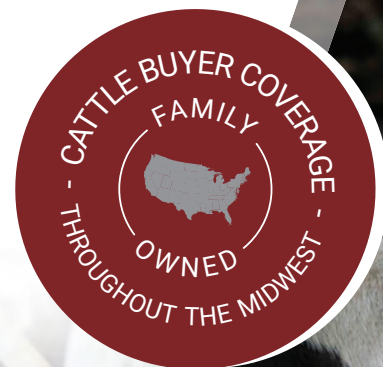
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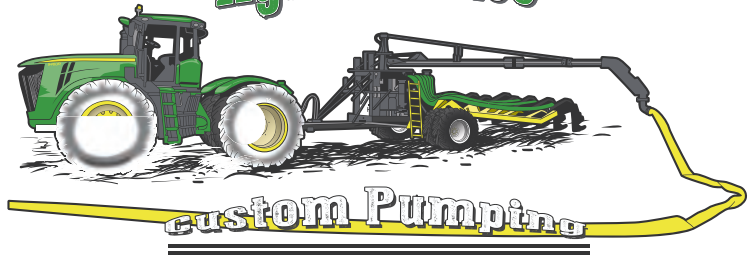
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2025 Iowa State Dairy Association Membership Form

**PRODUCER MEMBERSHIP:
Waived**
Open to any individual actively dairy farming by producing milk or raising heifer replacements.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP:
\$25/YEAR**
Available to any individual not actively dairy farming but has interest in the Iowa dairy industry.

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You can also visit the ISDA website at www.iowadairy.org to fill out an online membership form. Please make Associate Membership checks payable to the Iowa State Dairy Association. For 2025, the ISDA Producer Membership fee will be waived in recognition of the financial restraints in the agricultural industry in Iowa. In 2025, we will review reinstating membership fees for the 2026 calendar year.

While membership dues to the Iowa State Dairy Association are not tax deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes, a portion may be tax deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses. However, the portion of membership dues that represent nondeductible lobbying activities of Iowa State Dairy Association is not tax deductible. The nondeductible portion of your dues is 30%. **Please return dues and membership form to: ISDA Accounting Office, 2015 Rice Street, St. Paul, MN 55113.**