

## Leadership Perspective: A Farmer View on Dairy's Sustainability Journey

A Letter from Marilyn Hershey, Pennsylvania Dairy Farmer, Ar-Joy Farms and Chair, Dairy Management Inc.



We have [un]officially made it to summer! Three months of fast paced farming along with gatherings, adventures, and celebrations. A good mix of fun and work happens during summer. This year the arrival of summer seems especially sweet as we begin to return to a sense of normal and to our favorite celebrations.

For dairy, the festivities kicked off last week with World Milk Day and continue throughout June as we celebrate National Dairy Month (learn how later in the Newsletter). Milk is one of the [most affordable and efficient sources of nutrition in the world](#), and since 2005, global emissions per unit of product have fallen, even as global consumer demand for milk has grown by 30%. I'd say that deserves to be celebrated!

U.S. dairy farmers and the broader dairy community have made environmental sustainability an industry-wide priority, working collaboratively to address environmental issues like climate change, GHGs and water. We know that the production of nutritious and tasty dairy products – like all things – has an impact on the environment, but we believe it can be a positive one. Dairy can be an environmental solution.

There are scientifically proven solutions that can help farmers move the needle. Technologies that can capture and convert methane into clean electricity or natural gas. Feed additives that farmers can feed our cows to reduce the amount of methane they emit. Field-level practices, like cover crops and wildlife habitat areas, that can sequester carbon and improve the health of our soils. Technologies that allow us to recycle the water we use on our farms to irrigate our fields or even to turn it back into drinkable water. We are constantly learning new and better ways to improve our environmental footprint, and we are just starting to understand the many unique opportunities open to dairy farms.

But farmers aren't doing it alone. We've been fortunate to have a strong base of support from dairy processors, brands and stakeholders who are enthusiastic about industry-wide collaboration to help unearth opportunities and build economically viable pathways for important practices and technologies. We're working together to share resources and what we've learned through our own businesses, as well as through collaborations like the Dairy Sustainability Alliance®, the Net Zero Initiative and the Processor Working Group. What a great story of teamwork we can tell.

To help us tell that story in a credible way – no fish tales here – we need to be able to measure where we are now and our progress along the way. The [U.S. Dairy Stewardship Commitment](#) and the [National Dairy Farmers Assuring Responsible Management \(FARM\) Program](#) allow us to do that collectively in a way that encompasses dairy's broader social responsibility story. To date, companies representing 74% of U.S. milk production have adopted and will be reporting through the Stewardship Commitment. We'll be able to share an aggregate of this data in our bi-annual Sustainability Report later this fall. The FARM Animal Care Program covers 99% of the U.S. milk supply and the newest program areas – Environmental Stewardship and Workforce Development – are growing and will help us better tell dairy's full story at the farm level. We've built these programs together and they continue to evolve through multi-stakeholder input. If your companies are eligible but haven't yet signed on to these programs, please do so we can continue to measure and report on the great stories U.S. dairy has to tell.

Just like our favorite stories of summers past, U.S. dairy has incredible stories that we need to celebrate and proudly share again and again. Stories that reinforce dairy's commitment to working together to build healthy communities and sustainable food systems. Next week, we'll announce our seven 2021 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Award winners and encourage you to help us amplify their stories so even more people can learn about the amazing things our dairy community is doing – and maybe even replicate some of their practices in your businesses. This year also marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sustainability Awards program. This summer, we'll be checking in with the more than 75 past honorees to see where they are now and what new stories they have to share.

Because that's the great thing about sustainability, it's an adventure; a journey of continuous improvement that is always leading us to new challenges, new solutions and new opportunities. And summer is the perfect time for adventures.



## Dairy Sustainability Alliance Spring Meeting

Last month, more than 375 dairy stakeholders from across the country participated in the 2021 Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Virtual Spring Meeting. Attendees not only learned more about dairy community social responsibility initiatives, but also heard from other Dairy Sustainability Alliance members who shared their experiences and provided insights that others could adapt, adopt, and scale in their own organizations, including:



- How Net Zero Initiative Collective Impact projects that are currently underway will help farms of all sizes advance the industry's 2050 environmental stewardship goals.
- Insights and lessons learned from those implementing the National Dairy FARM Program's Environmental Stewardship and Workforce Development programs.
- Gen Z's views on social responsibility and their role as a driving force in the marketplace.
- An update on dairy's approach to biodiversity and the launch of a [public comment period](#) for biodiversity metrics (see more below).
- An intimate conversation with value chain executives on where dairy is today and how their own businesses and organizations are preparing for a successful future.

Attendees also had the opportunity to provide their input on the social aspects of dairy's social responsibility, including on a proposed dairy community vision and goals to address food security, through small group discussion sessions. That feedback will be shared with Innovation Center committees and task forces leading efforts in those areas.

Recordings from all the mainstage sessions are now [available on the event website](#).

If you attended the Virtual Spring Meeting and have not already done so, please take a few minutes to [provide your feedback](#), so we can continue to improve future meetings – both in-person and virtual.

## Save the Date

The 2021 Dairy Sustainability Alliance Fall Meeting will be held Friday, November 19 in Las Vegas, Nevada, following the 2021 Sustainable Agriculture Summit (see next story). We look forward to being back in person with you all once again!

If you have any questions, please contact [Angela.Hessinger@dairy.org](mailto:Angela.Hessinger@dairy.org).

## Sustainable Agriculture Summit Issues Call for Breakout Session Proposals



The Innovation Center will co-host the seventh annual [Sustainable Agriculture Summit](#) on **November 17-18** in **Las Vegas, NV**. Through its theme of **Regeneration and Resilience**, this year's Summit will unite leaders from across the full food and agriculture value chain to explore the power of partnerships in driving systems change, while providing actionable insights for U.S. agriculture's role in building a resource-positive future.

The global pandemic and its residual effects have underscored the importance of U.S. food and agriculture's ongoing efforts to build more resilient and regenerative production systems. Concurrently, global leaders are gathering for international forums throughout 2021 to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and impending climate targets. Lend your voice to U.S. agriculture's premier sustainability event as we cast a shared vision for how our industry responds to this transformational moment

Along with our fellow Summit organizers, we invite you to share your expertise and insights with more than 600 attendees from across the food and agriculture value chain by [submitting a proposal](#) for an in-person breakout session at this year's Summit. Successful breakout session proposals will:

- Directly connect to the theme of this year's Summit
- Creatively showcase how challenges can be turned into opportunities
- Include multiple, diverse speakers who represent a breadth of perspectives across the value chain
- **NEW:** Under the Summit's new **Farmer Track**, proposals may choose to present practical agronomic insights, tools, and resources which farmers can apply to their operations to improve sustainability outcomes.

Breakout session speakers will have the opportunity to share their expertise with diverse attendees from across the food and ag value chain, by:

- **Showcasing your organization's successes** and lessons learned to sustainability leaders from across the food and ag value chain
- **Strengthening cross-sector partnerships** with peers and industry stakeholders
- **Providing actionable insights** to farmers and the value chain
- **Shaping the industry conversation** on resiliency of the U.S. food system

Download the [Call for Speakers guide](#) to learn more about proposal guidelines. **Proposals must be submitted by August 16, 2021.**

If you have any questions, please contact [Angela.Hessinger@dairy.org](mailto:Angela.Hessinger@dairy.org).

## U.S. Dairy Opens Biodiversity Measures to Stakeholder Review



To maintain and enhance the value of the U.S. Dairy Stewardship Commitment, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy committees may propose metric refinements when a need is identified. Biodiversity is a rapidly growing priority in the marketplace and on the world stage, and during the Dairy Sustainability Alliance Spring Meeting last month, members of the Innovation Center's Environmental Stewardship Committee provided an update on biodiversity measures for U.S. dairy and introduced two dairy farm biodiversity metrics for stakeholder review. You can [watch a recording of that session](#) to learn more about these metrics and the work that has been done.

To ensure all engaged stakeholders have an opportunity to provide feedback, a 60-day stakeholder comment and review period is integral to the Stewardship Commitment process and is currently open for the proposed biodiversity metrics. The Innovation Center will consider feedback received, and following final review and approval, the new metrics will be added to the Stewardship Commitment.

Dairy Sustainable Alliance members are invited to [provide your feedback here](#). To ensure your most informed and complete response, please be sure to read the additional details on the proposed metrics included in the survey and follow the completion instructions as outlined. The stakeholder comment period is open until **July 19, 2021** and all survey responses must be submitted by this date.

If you have any questions, please contact [Joe.McMahan@dairy.org](mailto:Joe.McMahan@dairy.org).

## Net Zero Initiative Working with Dairy Community on Inventory of Current Farm Environmental Stewardship Practices

Every day, dairy farmers across the country are using technologies and practices that increase their efficiency, reduce environmental impacts, lower input costs, and bring other benefits. Better understanding of the types and extent of these solutions could be useful to celebrate success stories and identify areas of opportunity for focused education and outreach efforts. It would also help to establish a baseline of current practices as part of the Net Zero Initiative Collective Impact strategy.

In an effort to collect this information and create an inventory of existing on-farm solutions, the Net Zero Team would like to work with members of the dairy community that already survey producers about their use of environmental stewardship practices and technologies on farm. Questionnaires and data collected from participating companies and organizations would be aggregated and anonymized for an industry-wide perspective on what farmers are doing today to reduce GHG emissions, improve water quality and water use efficiency, and enhance farmers' livelihoods. If you would like to participate, please contact [Michelle.Rossmann@dairyresearch.org](mailto:Michelle.Rossmann@dairyresearch.org).

## Jump into Our Summer Webinar Series

Each month the Dairy Sustainability Alliance hosts webinars for its members to provide program updates and resources, share learnings and insights, or dive deeper on key social responsibility topics. This summer includes the return of our Member Discovery Series, which offers Dairy Sustainability Alliance members the opportunity to present their own dairy sustainability work and share learnings that fellow members can adopt, adapt and scale. You'll find a full list of summer webinars and virtual events in the "Upcoming Events" section at the end of this Newsletter. Watch for more webinars to be added in the coming weeks.

### Intro to the Dairy Farm Environmental Stewardship Considerations & Resource Guide

Tuesday, June 15 from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. CST

The Innovation Center has developed a new customizable resource for cooperatives, processors and other dairy agricultural service organizations to share with dairy farmers who are considering on-farm practices and technologies to increase efficiencies, lower a farm's greenhouse gas footprint, optimize nutrient use and improve water conservation. In just one page, the Dairy Farm Environmental Stewardship Considerations and Resource Guide gives farmers a quick on-farm self-assessment and supports the desire to bring farmers closer to local experts, resources, and tools.

This webinar will walk through the newly released resource guide, and attendees will learn how to customize the resource and support farmers with the self-assessment process. It will illustrate the value of utilizing the resource at the farm and at the dairy cooperative and processor levels, as well as how the guide complements NMPF's National Dairy FARM Environmental Stewardship Program. [Register here](#) for this webinar.



## Dry Dairy Processing Food Safety

Dry dairy products are key ingredients in many foods domestically and play an important role in dairy exports globally. The Innovation Center recognizes the importance of pathogen control in dry dairy operations to maintain and build trust in these products. A key to controlling pathogens in dry dairy processing environments is to control and eliminate water. The Innovation Center Food Safety Committee is pleased to share best practices from industry experts focused on eliminating and reducing water and moisture in dry dairy operations and take your questions as part of a two-webinar series on this important topic. These webinars are each stand-alone topics, but when put together, they provide a more complete picture of water and moisture control in dry dairy operations.



### Dry Cleaning in Dairy Operations for Pathogen Control

*Thursday, June 17 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. CST*

The first webinar in the Dry Dairy Processing series provides an overview of how to accomplish dry sanitation with special attention on vacuum management and the 7-step dry sanitation process. [Register here](#) for this webinar.

### Dry Dairy Operations - War on Water

*Friday, June 25 from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. CST*

The second webinar in the series will go further in explaining the importance of a war on water mentality and best practices to eliminate water and moisture from your dry dairy operation. [Register here](#) for this webinar.

## Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Member Discovery Series: A Framework for Farm-Level Sustainability Projects

*Tuesday, July 20 from 10:00-11:00 a.m. CST*

Farmers for Sustainable Food (FSF) and the Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance (LASA), along with key stakeholders in the dairy supply chain in Wisconsin, partnered to create a replicable framework for farmer-led sustainability projects. Supported by Grande Cheese and Nestlé, this framework outlines a project-based approach for farmers, other businesses as well as conservation professionals and organizations within a region to document impacts of conservation on farm.



Using sustainability platform tools, financial indices and environmental assessment tools, the impacts on local water and land resources of on-farm conservation practices are captured using The Framework for Farm-Level Sustainability Projects. These data can be used to illustrate continuous improvement and inform additional farm-specific conservation initiatives. Partners initiated a pilot project in 2020, where LASA members applied the framework and evaluated the efficacy and impacts of sustainability measurement platforms tools to demonstrate conservation practice benefits and increase adoption.

This webinar will provide an in-depth review of the framework for adoption by others who are engaging with farmers on sustainability projects. An example of applying the framework through the pilot project will be also shared including pilot project results.

[Register here](#) for this webinar.



## U.S. Dairy Efforts Ahead of U.N. Food Systems Summit



In our last newsletter, we shared that the United Nations will convene the first-ever [UN Food Systems Summit](#) (UN FSS) “to transform the way the world produces and consumes food,” an event that has the potential for significant implications for U.S. dairy. We also held a [webinar](#) to provide an overview of the UN FSS, global food systems and the role U.S. dairy plays. As preparations continue for the September UN FSS, following are key updates on the event and dairy’s efforts:

### Dairy Dialogue

On April 28, the National Dairy Council (NDC) partnered with U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC), The Nature Conservancy and the Global Child Nutrition Foundation to co-convene an independent UN FSS dialogue, “Advancing Food Systems Transformation to Nourish the Health of Future Generations and Enable a Sustainable Planet.” More than 100 voices from diverse sectors came together to identify practical solutions to better nourish future generations in more sustainable ways.

The discussions acknowledged the interconnectivity and complexity of issues involved within sustainable food systems, as well as what is needed to advance progress – economic, policy, knowledge/science, and technology enablers for change. Feedback from participants overwhelmingly supported the power of youth in the global dialogue while also reinforcing that U.S. dairy and dairy farmers are on the right track with existing commitments to environmental stewardship, food security and animal welfare.

An official [feedback form](#) from the dialogue that summarizes the discussion and the recommendations coming out of it was submitted to UN FSS stakeholders for inclusion in Summit deliberations. This event is one of hundreds happening in countries around the world to capture perspectives and game changing solution recommendations.

### Virtual Game-Changer Experiences

DMI, NDC, USDEC and NMPF hosted in-depth and interactive “virtual experiences” highlighting U.S. dairy’s game-changing solutions and the role dairy plays in building more sustainable food systems: the Net Zero Initiative, the FARM Program and food security/hunger efforts. Each experience was comprised of a comprehensive white paper, a video to bring the game-changer to life and a 90-minute interactive dialogue session.

Each also brought in dynamic subject matter experts, U.S. dairy partners and influential thought leaders across nutrition, environment and food systems disciplines for engaging in two-way dialogue on U.S. dairy’s efforts as a catalyst for broader, meaningful change. The conversations also allowed us to strengthen relationships with key stakeholders, showcasing the vital role U.S. dairy can play in sustainably nourishing a global population.

### U.S. Compendium of Sustainable Food System Actions

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which is serving as a UN FSS dialogue convener in the U.S., has created a new [compendium for sustainable food systems actions](#). This compendium is an opportunity for business, coalitions, organizations, and state or local governments to voluntarily submit brief overviews of the actions they are taking to build more sustainable food systems and to contribute to the UN FSS. Overviews of the Net Zero initiative, FARM Program and the Innovation Center as an industry convener have been submitted. We encourage you to consider a submission for your business or organization as a way to demonstrate the collective impact of the U.S. dairy industry.

### Key UN FSS Dates Announced

Heralded as the “People’s Summit”, input received for the UN FSS will be reviewed and distilled into a common vision for what will be discussed during the Summit in September. Two key forums will be used to support that process, with dairy industry experts and representatives participating in both:

- [Summit Science Days](#) will be held virtually by the Scientific Group of the UN FSS and FAO to support the UN FSS agenda setting process with scientific evidence and perspectives.
- [Pre-Summit](#) dates announced for July 26-28 in Rome, with the option to attend virtually. This will be the main forum for bringing together the best ideas from all the input received to identify priorities for September. It will also be a key venue for governments, businesses, civil society and others to announce new commitments, advance game changer solutions, set a tone of leadership and bold ambition, mobilize public and private investments, and generally promote global discussions on how food systems are integral to achieve the SDGs.

If you have any questions, please contact [Joe.McMahan@dairy.org](mailto:Joe.McMahan@dairy.org), [Angela.Hessinger@dairy.org](mailto:Angela.Hessinger@dairy.org) or [Kelly.Sheridan@dairy.org](mailto:Kelly.Sheridan@dairy.org).

## Busting Stereotypes and Beating the Lag this National Dairy Month

June is National Dairy Month, and this year we're introducing Gen Z to the next generation of dairy farmers. To kick off National Dairy Month, we've [debuted a new video](#) that challenges the farmer stereotype while showcasing the surprising side of Millennial and Gen Z dairy farmers and their commitments. Find out not only what Millennial and Gen Z dairy farmers from across the U.S. have in common with the next generation of consumers, but also what makes this generation of dairy farmers unexpectedly special.



Gen Z listens to influencers for ideas, inspiration and direction, and most game in some capacity. So dairy is partnering with a Dairy Dream Team of modern wellness influencers through programs like #BeatTheLag to help spread dairy joy while sharing our story of progress. To share how dairy can help "Beat the Lag" – a game or mental slow down – we worked with YouTubers and gaming influencers Jordan Maron ([Captain Sparklez](#)) and [Rosana Pansino](#) in the first ever #BeatTheLag Snack Challenge. On May 15, the gamers shared their own #BeatTheLag recipes while also asking their followers to hack the ultimate gaming snack. Fans will vote for the final winners, which will be announced during an epic live Twitch event later this month.

Be sure to check out Dairy Good's consumer-facing social channels ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)), where we'll continue highlighting Millennial and Gen Z dairy farmers, Sustainability Award winners, as well as posts showcasing recipes, dairy's nutritional benefits and more that you can amplify on your own social channels.

If you have any questions, please contact [Serena.Schaffner@dairy.org](mailto:Serena.Schaffner@dairy.org) or [Jessica.Learman@dairy.org](mailto:Jessica.Learman@dairy.org).

## Cows and Climate Change

When we announced 2050 environmental stewardship goals for the dairy community last spring, we said it would take all of us working together to achieve them. That includes the cow herself. Dr. Juan Tricarico, Vice President of Sustainability Research at the Innovation Center, has spent the last few months spreading the science on the role of dairy cows in the industry's environmental efforts:



### The Perfect Cow

[Dairy Star](#) and [Dairy Herd Management](#) reported on the March 2021 Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin's annual conference that featured Dr. Tricarico participating in a session addressing what makes the perfect cow of the future. Learn about the genetics, environmental and feed-efficiency factors that will impact future selection traits to reduce dairy's carbon footprint while continuing to supply milk demand globally.

### Feed Additives and Methane Reduction

Information on feed additives that can help reduce enteric methane emissions is evolving rapidly. This [scientific review](#) examined the publicly available evidence on mode of action, effectiveness, and safety for various feed additives. Dr. Tricarico described scientific findings and other important considerations for enteric methane mitigation with feed additives during the [2021 Florida Ruminant Nutrition Conference](#) and in this [Progressive Dairy](#) article.



### A Country with No Cows

A USDairy.com article, [Will Removing Dairy Cows Help Stop Climate Change?](#), centers on a study that evaluated environmental and nutritional impacts if dairy cows were removed from the U.S., and lays the foundation for this [Vox explainer video](#).

If you have any questions, please contact [Juan.Tricarico@dairy.org](mailto:Juan.Tricarico@dairy.org).

## New GENYOUth Survey Reveals Pandemic's Impact on U.S. Teens

In May, GENYOUth released its latest Youth Insights Survey, [The Impact of COVID-19 on Teens, One Year Later](#), as a follow-up to a survey conducted in May 2020 documenting the immediate disappointments of a crisis that at the time had not yet revealed its full horror and longevity. This new study identifies several areas of long-term concern and impact on youth well-being due to the pandemic:

### Social and Emotional Well-being

- Although 83% of young people say they are overall coping generally well, nearly half report their social and emotional well-being are less than good.

### Life and Death Fears

- Teens are acutely aware of the losses they are experiencing during the pandemic. In one of the survey's most jarring findings, approximately half of high schoolers are most worried about people they know and love getting sick and dying. More than half are most concerned about losing the happiest and most exciting years of their lives to the pandemic.

### School Safety Concerns

- Students continue to have concerns about in-person learning. As of March 2021, nearly half of teens surveyed attended at least some in-person classes, with lower numbers for Black and Hispanic students. Of students who were attending school in person, only 42% felt fully safe from COVID-19.

### Financial Hardship and Learning Challenges

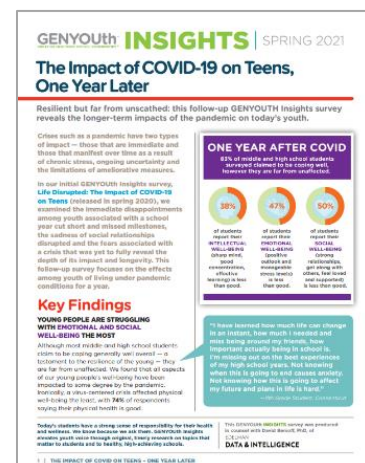
- Almost one-quarter of kids are worried about long-term family financial hardship, which increases to 3 in 10 for Black teens and teens from households making \$50,000 or less per year. In a related finding, 58% report a steady or growing need for meals supplied by or through schools.
- Over half say they are not learning or keeping up with their classes as well as they were pre-pandemic. Primary obstacles include increased difficulty absorbing information when not in the classroom, a lack of hands-on learning opportunities, unreasonable expectations of what they can do on their own, challenges in getting individualized help, and a high level of distractions when learning at home.

"That students are feeling stressed after a year of pandemic learning is not a surprise, but our GENYOUth survey uncovers some very concerning trends. One is the extent to which fear is permeating *all* areas of teens' lives – academic, financial, social – indicating a mental and emotional health crisis we are not equipped to handle. Another is a significant gap in preparedness as those who are about to graduate advance to higher levels of schooling or the workplace, which colleges and employers both need to prepare for," said Alexis Glick, CEO of GENYOUth.

### Taking Action to Help Teens

Dairy businesses and stakeholders play a key role in the well-being of our communities. The research points to six areas where programmatic school-based interventions, engagement by non-profits and the business sector, and government support will be necessary to address the impact of the pandemic on our young people. We encourage you to consider how your company or organization can make an impact for youth in your local communities.

1. Continued financial assistance and food support for the 25-30% of young people whose families are facing long-term financial hardship
2. Mental health support for students as they return to the school setting with compromised emotional, social, and intellectual well-being. This includes mental health support for teachers, many of whom have experienced their own traumas and hardships, and therefore may not be at their best or strongest just when their students will be needing them the most.
3. Tutoring and catch-up programs to help students who have fallen behind and require extra individual help to be fully prepared for next year and beyond.
4. Coaching and catch-up programs to help student athletes who may have missed two seasons of their sport and as a result may be out of shape with rusty skills.
5. Safety measures and the necessary reassurances to make returning students and teachers feel fully safe returning to the classroom, while not losing the most important social and interpersonal aspects of in-person schooling.
6. Remote learning infrastructure development and enhancement both to support any continuation of remote learning through the end of this pandemic and to maintain students' academic performance and readiness. This includes addressing the longstanding digital divide in education to ensure that laptops, broadband internet service and wireless hotspots are accessible and affordable for all households.



## Application Period Now Open for USDA Conservation Innovation Grants Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is currently seeking proposals for two Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Program opportunities:



### On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials

On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials feature collaboration between NRCS and partners to implement on-the-ground conservation activities and then evaluate their impact. NRCS is seeking proposals that address at least one of the following four On-Farm Trial priorities:

- Climate-smart agricultural solutions
- Soil health demonstration trial
- Irrigation water management
- Management technologies and strategies

A critical element of each On-Farm Trials project is the project evaluation. Partners must propose robust scientific approaches for their projects, resulting in data and analyses of the environmental, financial and, to the extent possible, social impacts of the trials.

NRCS will invest up to \$25 million on On-Farm Trials in 2021. This total includes up to \$10 million for the Soil Health Demonstration Trials (SHD) priority, which focuses exclusively on implementation of conservation practices and systems that improve soil health. **Proposals are due by June 21, 2021.** More information on this opportunity is [available here](#).

### CIG Classic

CIG Classic grants support early pilot projects or demonstrations of promising new conservation approaches, tools, and technologies. Partners use creative problem solving and innovation to address our nation's water quality, air quality, soil health and wildlife habitat challenges, all while improving agricultural operations. This year, funded CIGs will focus on climate-smart strategies for water resources, soil health (focused on carbon sequestration and climate resilience), nutrient management, grazing lands conservation and strategies to increase conservation adoption. Grantees must match each federal dollar invested at least one to one.

NRCS is investing up to \$15 million through the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program, at least 10% of the total funding for CIG Classic is intended for projects that are focused on providing conservation benefits to historically underserved producers. CIG Classic proposals must be submitted by **July 19, 2021**. More information on this opportunity is [available here](#).

Please visit the [CIG website](#) for more information on both of these funding opportunities.

## Member Briefs

Knowledge sharing and collaboration are key tenets of the Dairy Sustainability Alliance. Find out what's new with some of our 150+ member companies and organizations:

- The Dairy Sustainability Alliance has added **15 new members** so far in 2021. Welcome to [AmpliSource](#), [Brightmark](#), [Danone North America](#), [fairlife](#), [Feedworks USA](#), [Grōv Technologies](#), [Lactalis American Group](#), [Nestlé](#), [Nutrien Ag Solutions](#), [Shell](#), [Smith Brothers Farms](#), [The Hershey Company](#), [Vital Farms, Inc.](#), [Where Food Comes From, Inc.](#), and [Zinpro](#).
- The Dairy Strong Sustainability Alliance, an initiative of Dairy Sustainability Alliance member the **Dairy Business Association**, has [announced its transformation](#) into **Farmers for Sustainable Food**, a nonprofit organization that provides resources, advocacy, support and empowerment for farmers who are innovating and demonstrating sustainable farming practices. The change comes as the group has grown beyond dairy and beyond its original Wisconsin border. Farmers for Sustainable Food now supports six farmer-led watershed conservation groups encompassing 211 farms, nearly 300,000 acres and 212,000 cows, hogs and other livestock, and is also developing on-farm initiatives to test ways of measuring sustainability and documenting the impact of conservation practices, both environmentally and financially.
- In Indiana, "Winners Drink Milk" and dairy farmers deliver it to Victory Circle at the Indianapolis 500, a tradition since 1936. The **American Dairy Association Indiana** oversees this process, including surveying drivers ahead of the race so the "milk people" know which bottle to deliver. This year, Plymouth, IN dairy farmer **Jill Houin** served as the official Milk Woman, handing off a bottle of 2% milk to winning driver, Hélio Castroneves, who won his fourth Indy 500. After taking the traditional drink of white milk, he added strawberry flavoring to his winning bottle to match his pink fire suit and racecar. [Learn more about this tradition](#) and check out [this year's best Victory Circle milk moments](#).



- On June 1, dairy celebrated **World Milk Day**. This year's theme focused on sustainability to showcase dairy's commitment to innovation and adoption of technology to reduce the sector's environmental footprint. Dairy farms and businesses around the world celebrated by creating videos with farmers and others who are embracing technology to help create a low-carbon future for dairy, leading to campaign hashtags receiving 1.36 billion impressions worldwide. **Dairy Farmers of America's** introduction of the "[Nerd Herd](#)" is an excellent example of how this campaign was brought to life here in the U.S.
- Registration is now open for the fourth annual **Dairy Experience Forum** to be held virtually on **Tuesday, July 13 from noon to 5 p.m. EDT**. Hosted by **New England Dairy**, the Northeast Dairy Business Association, and local dairy checkoff organizations, the Forum brings together key stakeholders and leading speakers in the dairy industry for an innovative, disruptive event that will examine the key trends impacting today's consumers and opportunities to grow dairy sales. The Forum's popular live consumer focus group will be back this year, and attendees will hear first-hand from multi-cultural Gen Z consumers regarding their opinions on dairy, how they make their purchasing decisions, how their buying habits have changed since COVID-19, and how they view dairy farming. Learn more and register at [www.dairyexperienceforum.com](http://www.dairyexperienceforum.com).
- The **National Milk Producers Federation** and **National Dairy FARM Program** will host the **2021 Virtual Stakeholder Summit** on **July 14 and 15 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. EST** both days. The Summit will cover dairy policy priorities, NMPF's economic outlook, FARM Program updates, and U.S. dairy sustainability initiatives. More information, including a detailed agenda, will be available soon. [Registration](#) is free and open to all companies and organizations who serve the dairy industry. Please contact [dairyfarm@nmpf.org](mailto:dairyfarm@nmpf.org) with questions.
- Several Innovation Center companies and organizations joined the conversation on **Earth Day** (April 22), using their channels to link to the collective U.S. dairy initiatives and talk about how they advance sustainability in their businesses and back through to the farm. A variety of content was shared, ranging from annual sustainability and social responsibility reports to posts highlighting the industry's 2050 environmental goals and Net Zero Initiative, the U.S. Dairy Stewardship Commitment, the FARM program, community contributions and more. [Check out these great examples](#) to see how dairy companies are telling their story and reinforcing that the U.S. dairy community is working together for progress.
- Hansel New, Director of Sustainability Programs at Dairy Farmers of America and Co-Chair of the **SAI Platform's Dairy Working Group (DWG)**, [talks about the role of the DWG](#) and Sustainable Dairy Partnership in helping to align global goals in the dairy space.

## Upcoming Events

Ongoing	<a href="#">Food Safety Basics for Ice Cream Makers Online Training Course</a>	Online Training
Ongoing	<a href="#">Food Safety Basics for Artisan Cheesemakers Online Training Courses</a>	Online Training
June	National Dairy Month	
June 15 11 a.m.-12 p.m. CST	Introduction to the Dairy Farm Environmental Stewardship Considerations & Resource Guide <a href="#">Click here to register</a> for this webinar	Webinar
June 17 1-2 p.m. CST	Dry Cleaning in Dairy Operations for Pathogen Control <a href="#">Click here to register</a> for this webinar	Webinar
June 25 11:30 a.m.-12 p.m. CST	Dry Dairy Operations - War on Water <a href="#">Click here to register</a> for this webinar	Webinar
July 8-9	<a href="#">UN Food Systems Summit Science Days</a>	Virtual Event
July 13	<a href="#">Dairy Experience Forum</a> hosted by New England Dairy	Virtual Event
July 14-15	<a href="#">2021 Virtual Stakeholder Summit</a> hosted by NMPF & National Dairy FARM Program	Virtual Event
July 19	<b>DEADLINE:</b> <a href="#">Biodiversity Metric Comment Period Ends</a>	Comment Period

# Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Newsletter



Summer 2021

July 20 <i>10-11 a.m. CST</i>	Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Member Discovery Series: A Framework for Farm-Level Sustainability Projects <a href="#">Click here to register</a> for this webinar	Webinar
July 26-28	<a href="#">Pre- Summit of the UN Food Systems Summit</a>	Rome, Italy / Virtual Event
Aug. 16	<b>DEADLINE:</b> Sustainable Ag Summit <a href="#">Breakout Session Proposals Due</a>	
September	<a href="#">UN Food Systems Summit 2021</a>	New York, NY
Oct. 12	National Farmers Day	
Nov.17-18	<a href="#">2021 Sustainable Agriculture Summit</a>	Las Vegas, NV
Nov. 19	<a href="#">2021 Dairy Sustainability Alliance Fall Meeting</a>	Las Vegas, NV