



2025 Annual Report



Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council
Maine Dairy Promotion Board
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www.drinkmainemilk.org

On the Cover: 2025 Green Pastures Award Winner - Rainbow Valley Farm

Eight of Maine's dairy farms were nominated by peers to earn the New England Green Pastures Award, which recognizes an outstanding dairy farm from each New England state.

Congratulations to the Bragg family and Rainbow Valley Farm, Sidney, Maine for their efforts in outstanding dairy farm stewardship practices!

"The summer I was seven, I remember walking through the barn with another kid about my same age. And I remember him saying, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' And I clearly told him, 'I want to be a dairy farmer.'" – Jeff Bragg.

[Watch an interview](#) with the Bragg family on NewsCenter's 207.



Left to right, UMaine Extension Forage Specialist Jaime Garzon and Bragg family members Brielle, Jake, Jillian, Desmond, Weston, Cadence, Kenny, Kathy and Jeff

Your Farmer's Perspective

It continues to be an honour to serve as Chair of Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council as well as to represent Maine's Dairy Community as a Director on the UDIA and DMI Board. While I concluded my service as Secretary of National Dairy Council I continued throughout 2025 as Vice Chair of DMI's Sustainability Committee. These roles have all provided me with the opportunity to ensure that the perspectives and work of Maine dairy farmers are not forgotten, nor are they ignored when it comes to the utilization of our farmer funds. While our farms and farm businesses throughout the state are all unique we share and value the importance of making certain that our hard earned monies are well invested in ways that drive measurable benefit to our industry. Here in Maine there should be no doubt that our investment is put to good work when we see the reach and relationships with many schools throughout all 16 countities in Maine. Whether through Adopt A Cow, grants, or program assistance; the continued relationship with University of Maine Athletics; the mentorship and learning opportunities for Dietetic Interns who will some day be advising our future customers to choose dairy; helping to put Maine Dairy front and center at UMaine Hockey's Dairy Night and at the Sea Dog's Dairy Day; and so much more...

At the national level we know our funding has supported quality research into the the benefits and goodness of real dairy and that has been crucial in the continuing work regarding the Dietary Guidelines and the importance to childhood development and good health. In the coming year more data, findings, and outcomes from our partnership with the Mayo Clinic will surface; more dairy farmers and their advisors will utilize the Dairy Conservation Navigator (<https://www.dairyconservation.org/>) to find solutions, funding, and metrics to bolster their bottom line, land and communities; investments in research, discovery, innovation and potential will continue to support our producers and the wonderful products we put on the table and grow demand...and most of all Maine will continue to have a voice, a say, an opinion, and vote in decision making, goal setting and investments no matter what. You can always make your voice heard and be counted by reaching out to me and I hope you do.

Jenni Tilton-Flood, Chair, Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council
Board of Directors, UDIA and DMI
jtiltonflood@me.com



Your Farmer's Perspective



There are so many reasons for dairy!

One of them is the roles that dairy plays in Health and Wellness. Our national and state/regional teams have been busy making sure that dairy products are the preferred ones to purchase and consume, driving dairy demand and sales.

***Starting at the 1st 1000 Days dairy fuels early childhood development and is essential for prenatal growth. Dairy contains iodine, a nutrient often lacking, that is essential for brain development and contributes to strong bones and healthy prenatal growth.**

***Dairy continues to play a role in schools providing nutrition to help youth stay focused and have the energy to learn. We have been protecting and elevating dairy's role in school meals. Providing guidance and recipes to school nutrition directors to keep dairy in meals while meeting the ever changing dietary guidelines has been key. School milk, including full fat dairy, continues to be a key area of emphasis.**

***Other individuals consume dairy to refuel and refresh their bodies after performance activities. No matter what your activity or skill level dairy provides the key nutrients to help maximize your potential.**

***Credible science is playing a key role in driving dairy recommendations. Your check off organization has been helping to fund research that provides the answers people are looking for about the health and wellness benefits of dairy. This research has also helped to ensure that dairy remained a key part of the new dietary guidelines.**

***Innovation continues to play a role in the development of new dairy products for our health needs. There are multiple consumer groups that continue to change and evolve as they age. Each of them is looking for their ideal way to fuel their body. Consumers are also looking for products that can help them sleep, lose weight, or just be a better version of themselves. Dairy can help with all of those goals.**

This is only a small piece of what our staff is doing to promote and elevate dairy. Stay involved in what your dairy checkoff is doing and watch for all the ways that "Dairy Does More!" @ dairycheckoff.com

-Kate Fogler, National Dairy Board Director, DMI Board of Directors, Maine Dairy and Nutrition Council Board Member

Message from the Director



Eight years ago, after hosting a farm tour for registered dietitians on the farm I was managing, I wanted to better understand the work and the investment of MDPB & MDNC. The experience was so incredible, connecting the dots between production and consumption, I wondered how I could get more involved.

A few months later the Executive Director position was advertised, and I was approached by several people about considering the opportunity. I wasn't sure it was how I wanted to be involved but explored it further and started drafting questions about the things I wanted to know if I was selected for an interview.

- What's the elevator pitch for this organization, you have 45 seconds to tell me what you do, what do you say?
- I didn't understand all that checkoff did until I started to look into where this money was going, how can we better-communicate the work to other farmers?
- Is the organization ready to modernize its outward appearance by updating the website, jumping deeper into social media channels, and exploring new opportunities to tell our story?
- How often will I be required to travel to meetings on behalf of the organization?
- How are Maine's dairy farmers encouraged to get involved locally and nationally?

The enthusiasm of the board and the dedication of the staff left me wondering if I would be able to keep up with them. I genuinely did not expect to be offered the role to lead the organization.

In the seven years since, I've tried to perfect my 45 second, feed store parking lot speech about our work, about the connections of all the organizations in Your Dairy Checkoff, and all the work that we do while staying within rules and regulations of statute. I still smile and remind people; I work for you and all the dairy farmers of Maine, not the government.

I continue to invite you to participate with us, come on school visits, host farm tours with us, join us at community events, be featured in our social media posts and chat with us at dairy industry events! I want to know what you have for questions, concerns, and comments about our work.

Call, text, or email me anytime on my cell at 207-446-6121 and Sarah@DrinkMaineMilk.Org. Reach out while you are in the field or the parlor and you have a thought, I might be in one of those places too but I will answer you!

Joint Board of Directors



Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council



Jenni Tilton-Flood
Flood Brothers Farm



Steve Keene
Conant Acres



Dustin Lagrange
Oakhurst Dairy



Jacob Bragg
Rainbow Valley Farm

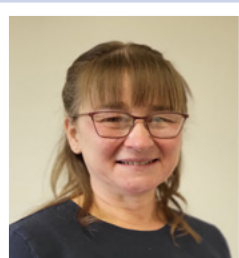


Kate Fogler
Stonyvale Farm

Maine Dairy Promotion Board



Heath Miller
Green Valle Farm



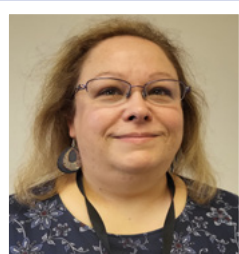
Teresa Hardy
Hardy Farm



Patricia Henderson
J.F Witter Farm



Betsy Bullard
Brigee Farms



Julie-Marie Bickford
Maine DACF

Financials

Maine Dairy and Nutrition Council 2025 Audited Financial Statement

INCOME

Carried forward from previous year (restated) \$ 37,347

Current Year Income:

Transfer from Maine Dairy Promotion Board	\$ 108,628
Dealer Fee	89,212
Other Income	41
Interest Income	21

Total Current Year Income **\$ 197,902**

Total Current Income & Carryover **\$ 235,249**

EXPENSES

Local Marketing Implementation:

Operating Expenses \$ 207,851

Unified Marketing Plan Programs \$ 10,453

Total Expenses **\$ 218,309**

Funds available for future year programs **\$ 16,940**

Maine Dairy Promotion Board 2025 Audited Financial Statement

INCOME

Carried forward from previous year (restated) \$ 294,130

Current Year Income:

Producer Checkoff Remittance	\$ 540,673
Transfer to Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council	(108,628)

Net Checkoff Income \$ 432,045

Interest Income	\$ 146
MEMIC Dividend	115
Other Income	25
Supplemental Funding (Restricted)	135,200

Total Current Year Income **\$ 567,531**

Total Current Income & Carryover **\$ 861,661**

EXPENSES

Local Marketing Implementation:

Operating Expenses \$ 226,193

UDIA Dues 125,000

Total Local Marketing Implementation \$ 351,193

National Program Funding Commitment \$ 135,592

Unified Marketing Plan Programs \$ 83,826

Total Expenses **\$ 570,612**

Funds available for future year programs **\$ 291,049**

Dairy Checkoff Highlights

YOUR CHECKOFF IS BUILDING TRUST AND DRIVING SALES

FOODSERVICE

WHY WE INVESTED

Dairy was under-represented in menu innovation; foodservice players were reducing dairy usage. The Board determined checkoff needed to partner with restaurants

WHAT WE DID

Invested in innovation and provided product science for commercialization.

HOW WE DID IT

Partnered with foodservice leaders to drive dairy menu innovation, test products, grow volume and build trust in dairy.

OUTCOME

3.49

to 1
Cumulative
2009-2024

7.87

to 1
2024
(invested \$5.19 Million)

WHOLE FAT SCIENCE

OUTCOME

34.55

to 1
Cumulative
2012-2024

34.68

to 1
2024
(invested \$1.16 Million)

WHY WE INVESTED

Butter and whole fat dairy were considered "bad" and lower fat dairy was growing. The Board determined checkoff needed to change perceptions and reset the sales trajectory of whole fat products.

WHAT WE DID

Invested in human science studies helping prove higher-fat dairy's health benefits. Promoted science to health care professionals, thought leaders and consumers.

HOW WE DID IT

Funded research and activated it in practice, resulting in whole milk's retail fluid milk share increasing from 27% in 2013 to 49% in 2025. (Circana)

FLUID MILK INNOVATION

WHY WE INVESTED

Milk lacked relevance and demand was declining. The Board decided the checkoff needed to make milk relevant again.

WHAT WE DID

Partnered with brands to drive new product innovation and marketing of value-added milk.

HOW WE DID IT

Assisted in developing, testing, and launching new value-added milk products and supported their marketing. This led to over \$2.2 billion in new industry infrastructure and increased product marketing.

OUTCOME

1.68

to 1
Cumulative
2018-2024

6.39

to 1
2024
(invested \$1.93 Million)

EXPORTS

OUTCOME

12.17

to 1
Cumulative
2013-2024

9.30

to 1
2024
(invested \$37.88 Million)

WHY WE INVESTED

Milk production outpaced U.S. consumption. The Board decided checkoff needed to create new markets and opportunities around the world.

WHAT WE DID

Built international relationships through research and collaboration, and innovated through partnerships to meet international demand.

HOW WE DID IT

Built local advocates, learned to offer products made for international and culturally diverse diets, working through the checkoff-created U.S. Dairy Export Council.

Each of the four areas was analyzed based on available data. Not all areas were measured across the exact same timeframe nor using the same data sets based on data availability.

Dairy in Schools

Our school-based programming emphasizes forging strong relationships with school nutrition professionals, supporting their work and encouraging consumption of dairy in schools. School nutrition equipment grants continue to be an effective strategy for engaging students and providing them with dairy-forward menu options. Visits to grant recipients throughout the year provide an opportunity to observe the impact dairy farmer dollars make on local communities, promoting healthy food choices among Maine children.

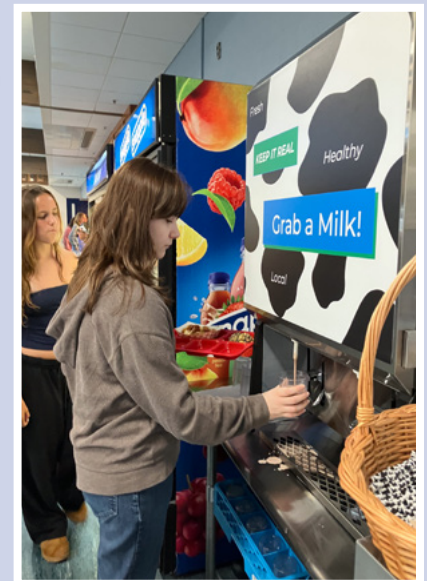
Our 2024 School Nutrition Equipment Grants Year-End Report (collected June 2025 for the 2024-25 school year) found that students at grant-funded schools consumed over 1,500,000 oz. more milk and 61,000 oz. more yogurt than the prior year.

School Nutrition Equipment Grants

17 grants awarded

- 12 Moovable Milk Barrel Awards
- 2 Fuel Up Stations
- 2 Bulk Milk Dispensers
- 1 Mobile Meals Cart

Student Impact: 4,594



Summer Meals Cooler Grants

15 grants awarded

- Sets of 3 Sterno soft-sided coolers

Student Impact: 107,400 meals served



Dairy in Schools

**External Funds*

*Fuel Up / GenYOUth 2025 Grants

12 grants awarded

-10 Smoothie Stations

-2 Mobile Meals Carts

Student Impact: 5,435

*NFL Flag Kits

11 Maine Schools

Student Impact: 3,370



*NDC / MilkPEP Cafeteria Posters

80 Maine Schools

Smart Swaps

Launched in 2025, the SMART SWAPS initiative was developed to provide the dairy community with materials to communicate the USDA's changes to school nutrition professionals and other stakeholders. Designed to support school nutrition professionals as they work to meet evolving USDA meal standards, SMART SWAPS offers student-tested and approved recipes, sample menus, and planning tools designed to make meals nutritious, appealing, and easy to prepare—without losing the dairy favorites students love.



SMART SWAPS

SCHOOL NUTRITION STANDARDS ARE CHANGING...

SMART SWAPS is here to help school nutrition professionals meet the new meal pattern standards with easy-to-use resources that support nutritious, appealing breakfast choices students will enjoy.

Key Features

- 25 Kid-approved recipes
- Nutrient analysis & crediting components included
- Step-by-step photo recipe guides
- 3 Sample menus that meet the new added sugar limit
- Training resources including video tutorials

Visit smart-swaps.com or scan the QR code to learn more.



Dairy in Schools

Recognition Events Throughout The School Year

During *National School Lunch Week* in October and *National School Breakfast Week* in March, digital assets developed in partnership with University of Maine Athletics were distributed to all Maine school nutrition programs, while staff conducted visits with guest dairy farmers to grant recipients. To recognize the Maine Department of Education Child Nutrition Program's *Dairy Harvest of the Month* initiative in April, *Enjoy Maine Milk* posters were sent to grant schools. *School Lunch Hero Day* in May was celebrated with hanging banners and a letter of appreciation to grant schools.

Collaboration

In partnership with New England Dairy, Maine school nutrition professionals were able to participate in the School Nutrition Expert Forum where they networked with colleagues from other New England school nutrition programs, discussed dairy-in-school related topics and were immersed in dairy farm-to-school conversations and experiences.



Dairy farm tour at the School Nutrition Expert Forum



Quotes from the Maine School Nutrition Community

The red insulated coolers were much more convenient than keeping our milk cooler open during feeding times. The red insulated coolers also made it easier for children to reach and choose a milk.

-Alisa Rector, RSU#39

The students love seeing the milk in the milk barrels and picking it up themselves. They like that the milk is so cold- that has really surprised them how cold the barrels keep the milk.

-Wendy McDonald, Orrington and Dedham

The milk barrels were a fun and engaging marketing tool to showcase milk. Displaying them at the end of our serving line had a noticeable impact, encouraging more students to choose milk with their meals. We sincerely appreciate the support of the Maine Dairy Council in helping make this possible!

-Tina Fabian, RSU 3

There were 661 children who benefited from the milk cooler provided to us at MSAD 13. We greatly appreciate it as it kept all our milks and yogurts at the appropriate holding temperature required even on extremely hot days! We value our coolers we received and look forward to distributing more with them throughout the school and community as we drift into our school year. Thank you so much and we appreciate you picking Valley High School and Moscow Elementary for the grant.

-Melanie Caswell, SAD 13/RSU 83

This piece of equipment is the coolest—both figuratively and literally. The students truly enjoy—and hopefully appreciate—having access to the yogurt bar, especially with the fresh fruit mix-ins. Honestly, we didn't realize just how much yogurt we were going through until we saw the distributor's numbers. It's clearly a big hit!

-Cyndi Kimball, Easton

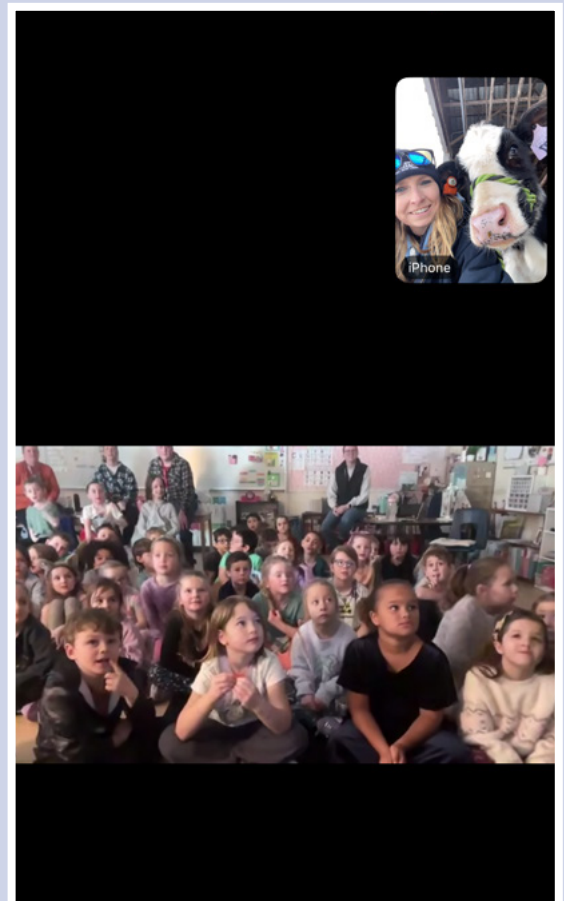


Adopt a Cow

For the fourth year we partnered with the Dairy Excellence Foundation on the Adopt a Cow program, a year-long, free, virtual program that connects classrooms to a local dairy farm. Through photo and video updates, hands-on learning activities, and a live virtual chat with a dairy farmer, students gained a deeper understanding of dairy farming, dairy cows, and how milk is produced.



For the 2025-26 school year, Maine's farm came from Orono - Witter Farm, which is a part of the University of Maine campus. We had 562 registrants which has a student impact of 14,796. Farm Superintendent, Patricia Henderson took on the responsibility of being the host farm. This includes taking photos and measurements, filling out update forms, answering emails, recording videos, offering farm tours in person and virtually, and more. It was a huge commitment, and we are grateful for the time and effort this entails.



Dairy Day at the Sea Dogs

This year we did a sponsored 'Dairy Day' game with the Portland Sea Dogs. The Sea Dogs are the minor league Double-A Affiliate of the Boston Red Sox. Since 1994, the Portland Sea Dogs have attracted fans of all ages, becoming a fixture in the community as well as acquiring local and national recognition on and off the field.



Our game was held on June 8th to help celebrate National Dairy Month. The ballpark sold out, with an attendance of 6,868 fans.

In game activations included - a cowbell giveaway to the first 1,000 fans. Concourse tabling where we got to interact with fans throughout the course of the game.

A radio interview with our own Sarah Littlefield that was streamed live on the Sea Dogs radio network and their MiLB TV Platform. Videoboard recognition throughout the game along with PA announcements that educate the fans on Maine Dairy. There were In-Game promotions for fans to participate in dairy themed games between innings.



We felt this game was a big success at getting to interact with consumers as well as celebrate Maine's dairy farmer's for all that they do.



Photo from the In-Game promotion game of the 'baby calf race'

Partnership with UMaine Athletics

For 20 years, we have had a partnership with the University of Maine Athletics Program, giving us opportunities to connect with key demographics - families and college aged students. In addition to our two events we sponsor with the Black Bears, they also provide us with our logo placement and links to our website on their athletics page

(goblackbears.com) and in their Football virtual "Yearbook".

UMaine has also been able to provide us with assets for us to distribute during National School Lunch Week and National School Breakfast Week. These assets are available for school nutrition staff to use around their cafeteria's as well as promoted on our social media pages. We also get different media activations for games. For television we get one (30 second) commercial and one (10 second) live read in all video streamed game broadcasts produced by Van Wagner/Maine Athletics on ESPN+ or other conference streaming platforms. For radio, we get one (30 second) commercial spot, and one (10 second) live read in all regular season game broadcasts, Maine Football, Men's and Women's Basketball, & Men's Ice Hockey.



Dairy Night with Black Bear Hockey

Every year we sponsor a UMaine Men's Hockey game. Over the course of the game we have a table where we can interact with fans as well as have a dairy farmer be interviewed on both the radio and ESPN +. We also have a farmer recognition on the ice pregame and several mentions throughout the game. This year was a bit different than the past as we had two games in 2025. Both of our games were to a sold out crowd, where the arena holds 5,043 fans. Our second game of the year was also special because we were celebrating the 20th year of this partnership.



Meet the Bears with Maine Football

This was the fifth year of the 'Meet the Bears' event with Maine Football. This is a free event to the public for kids to come and practice with the UMaine football team for free. Kids run through drills, with dairy educational messaging on the jumbotron throughout the day.

The children - and players - then get to enjoy pizza and chocolate milk at the end. The Black Bears also have a player give a speech to the kids where they mention the importance of dairy in your diet. Attendance for this event was 100 families with elementary-age children.

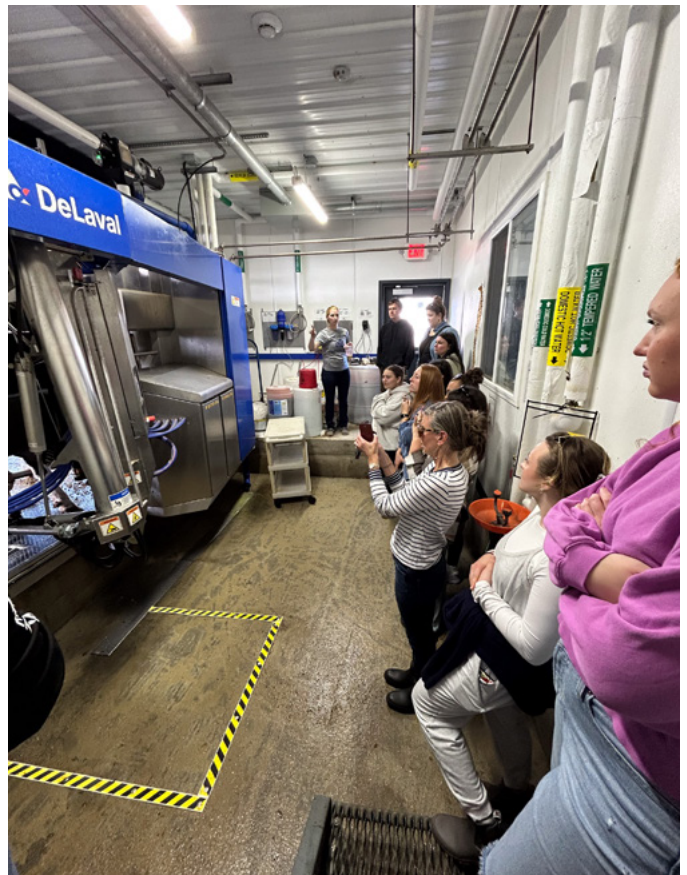


Future Dietitians Intern with Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council

Separate from our relationship with UMaine athletics, MDPB and MDNC have formed a long-standing relationship within the dietetic intern program at University of Maine. This year, we hosted one intern, sharing them with the Department of Education's Child Nutrition. Each intern does multiple dairy-centric projects with us and always tours one or two dairy farms, focusing on cow health and nutrition and sustainability on that farm. We also got to host the entire dietetic intern program and senior UMaine Nutrition and Dietetics students for a farm tour of the University dairy farm (Witter Farm).



Intern Darcy MacLean with the cows at Flood Brothers Farm



Dietetic interns learning about the robotic milking machine