



Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Newsletter

Spring 2024

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER! Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Spring Meeting Next Week



DAIRY SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE®

Spring Meeting | April 17-18, 2024 | Rosemont, IL



[Register Here](#)

Join us next week **April 17-18 in Rosemont, IL** for the **2024 Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Spring Meeting**. Stay up to date with fresh insights and reports from stakeholders across the dairy value chain, learn how fellow Alliance members put tools and resources into practice, and inform the development of industry social responsibility efforts by sharing your input.

If you've already registered, you should have received a "Know Before You Go Email" yesterday. You may need to check your spam folder if you don't see it. Contact Tammy.Taylor@dairy.org if you have any questions about your registration.

You can still [register today](#) and [make your reservation](#) at the **Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel & Conference Center** (5440 River Road Rosemont, IL) to join us. Don't miss out: be part of the continued collaboration to advance solutions for a more sustainable world and thriving U.S. dairy community!

April 16 from 5:30 -7:00 p.m. CDT - Welcome Reception

April 17 from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. CDT | April 18 from 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. CDT

Additional details and a draft agenda are available on the event website: <http://AllianceMeeting.USDAiry.com>. Please contact Tammy.Taylor@dairy.org with questions.

If you can't make it to our Spring Meeting, we hope you'll make plans to join us this fall:

- **Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Fall Meeting**, November 18-19, in Minneapolis, MN
- **Sustainable Agriculture Summit**, November 20-21, in Minneapolis, MN

More information about both meetings is available on their event websites, <https://AllianceMeeting.USDAiry.com> and www.SustainableAgSummit.org, or by contacting Angela.Hessinger@dairy.org.



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Dairy Sustainability Alliance® News

Dairy Sustainability Alliance Welcomes New Members

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy is excited to welcome these new Alliance members:



If you'd like to learn more about becoming a Dairy Sustainability Alliance® member, please contact Angela.Hessinger@dairy.org.

Past Due: Dairy Sustainability Alliance 2024 Membership Renewal

Membership in the Dairy Sustainability Alliance is evaluated on an annual basis and is dependent on each member organization's fulfillment of their responsibilities during the previous year. Membership renewals were due March 1 and we have not yet heard from some organizations. If you have not yet completed your member renewal for 2024, please complete the form that was sent to your primary contact or contact Erin.DeGennaro@dairy.org with questions.

If you have questions about the membership renewal process, please contact Erin.DeGennaro@dairy.org

Recording of Member Discovery Series Webinar on Genetic Advancement of the Dairy Cow Now Available

Last month, representatives from Zoetis, Farmers for Sustainable Food and Dairy Management Inc. hosted a webinar to discuss the recent study showcasing how improved animal health and genetics are associated with environmental sustainability outcomes. [Watch the recording here](#) to learn more about the study and how Zoetis is collaborating with dairy to help bring advanced tools to producers to evaluate the relative impact of animal health, productivity, and genetic improvement on the carbon footprint of dairy farms.



Watch for more webinar opportunities to be added throughout the year to continue your 2024 Dairy Sustainability Alliance engagement.



Advance Well-Being

Still time to Register: Dairy Nourishes America Eastern Symposium

It's not too late to join the Dairy Nourishes America Eastern Symposium on April 29 – May 1, 2024 in Rochester, NY.

This interactive, multi-day experience will feature several keynote speakers including Feeding America's CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, USDA AMS Administrator Bruce Summers and National Medical Association leader Dr. Winston Price. Over 70 food bank staff have already registered. Dairy community members responsible for marketing, strategic initiatives, corporate social responsibility, communications, government relations, customer relations, and community impact are encouraged to attend this symposium to create solutions and build relationships that will increase dairy options available for food banks and serve people facing hunger in their local communities. Follow this [link](#) to register.

Reach out to Tab.Forqac@dairy.org or Katie.Bambacht@dairy.org if you have questions.



White House Challenge to End Hunger & Build Healthy Communities

The White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities – a coalition of stakeholders including health systems, insurers, non-profits, academia, agriculture, companies and more – [announced 141 new commitments](#) in February. The \$1.7 billion in new commitments are designed to further the challenge's aim of ending hunger and reducing diet-related disease and health disparities. The commitments from the National Dairy Council (NDC) and International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) were recognized. NDC's commitment to support the advancement of the next generation of health and wellness professionals and nutrition scientists includes:

- Establishing an endowed Early Career Investigator Research Award to promote groundbreaking research and innovation.
- Launching a NextGen Scientist Professional Mentorship Program – a first-of-its-kind, three-year cohort initiative designed to connect rising academic leaders with seasoned experts for immersive experiences, skill-building, and mentorship components.
- Modernizing approaches to novel nutrition education and outreach to reach at least 40,000 medical and health professionals over the next five years.
- Expansion of NDC internship and mentoring programs, supporting dietetic students, interns, and early career registered dietitians.

IDFA will expand the [Healthy School Milk Commitment](#) – a pledge by 37 dairy companies to reduce added sugars and calories in non-fat and 1% flavored milk provided to schools and residential childcare institutions participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) by the 2025-26 school year. The effort will include the USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) beginning in summer 2026.



Food and Drug Administration Announces Qualified Health Claim for Yogurt

On March 1, 2024, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [announced](#) the first-ever qualified health claim for yogurt. The claim identifies a potential link between yogurt consumption and a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes.

Health claims characterize the relationship between a substance and a disease or health-related condition. Qualified health claims, such as the relationship between yogurt and type 2 diabetes, are supported by scientific evidence but do not meet the more rigorous “significant scientific agreement” standard required for an authorized health claim. Therefore, this health claim must be communicated with appropriate “qualifying” language as seen below:

- “Eating yogurt regularly, at least 2 cups (3 servings) per week, may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. FDA has concluded that there is limited information supporting this claim.”
- “Eating yogurt regularly, at least 2 cups (3 servings) per week, may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes according to limited scientific evidence.”

If you have any questions, please reach out to Megan Maisano (Megan.Maisano@dairy.org).

Quarterly Health & Wellness Insights

The Innovation Center’s Health & Well-being Committee is excited to continue to host Health and Wellness Insights webinars on a quarterly basis for processors and cooperatives that are looking to expand their knowledge of news, trends, on-pack claims, and research in the health space. This content will equip U.S. dairy companies and R&D teams as they work to modernize, innovate, and lead in the health and wellness space with dairy as a solution to delivering nutrition that meets current, emerging, and individualized needs.

The March webinar covered trending topics in the health and wellness space, including cultural shifts, Ozempic’s effect, and dairy-specific research. A link to the recording can be [found here](#). The next quarterly webinar updates will be on June 12, September 25, and December 4.

Please pass this along to anyone in your organization that would find this content useful and reach out to Erin DeGennaro (Erin.DeGennaro@dairy.org) to add yourself or others to the Health & Wellness Insights mailing list.

Regenerate the Environment

Regional Conservation Partnership Program Accepting Proposals

[USDA announced](#) it is accepting proposals for \$1.5 billion in available funding to invest in partner-driven conservation and climate solutions through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

USDA is accepting project proposals now through **July 2, 2024**, to support farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in adopting and expanding conservation strategies to enhance natural resources and address climate change. These projects in turn can save farmers money, create new revenue streams, and increase productivity.

There are two separate opportunities in this year’s funding: RCPP Classic and RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA). RCPP Classic projects are implemented using Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) contracts and easements with producers, landowners, and communities in collaboration with project partners. Through RCPP AFA, the lead partner works directly with agricultural producers to support the development of innovative conservation approaches that would not otherwise be available under RCPP Classic.

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Project proposals for RCPP are being accepted through the [RCPP portal](#). Use the following links to learn more on the [RCPP Classic](#) and [RCPP AFA](#) funding opportunities.

NRCS will be hosting webinars to provide additional information. Learn how to participate at the [RCPP website](#).

In November 2023, NRCS announced more than \$1 billion in RCPP projects across the country. Of the 81 projects awarded, 10 include dairy and represent a total funding of \$96.4 million.

New Materiality Assessment Workshop for Dairy Processors

Next month, the Wisconsin Cheese Makers' Association (WCMA) will host *Optimizing Sustainability: Materiality Assessment Workshop for Dairy Processors*. This new offering is designed to help dairy processors develop and complete a materiality assessment for their company or cooperative. As a first step in mapping out a sustainability strategy, a well-conducted materiality assessment can help businesses identify key sustainability priorities and answer customer-driven questions while also helping processors meet the growing demands of measuring and reporting their sustainability goals and practices.

Workshop participants will experience a comprehensive exploration of key sustainability topics, materiality assessment development steps, stakeholder engagement, data collection and analysis, and more. Supported by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards and other relevant industry standards, workshop content will be delivered by WCMA partners and sustainability leaders from [Harbor Environmental](#) and the [Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy](#).

A few spaces remain open, [secure yours today](#) to participate in this workshop on May 7 and 8 in Madison, WI.

Please reach out to Danica Nilsestuen with questions at dnilsestuen@wischeesemakers.org.

FARM ES Prepares for Launch of Version 3.0 and New Database of Farmer Resources

The FARM Program recently launched a new database to help farmers and their advisors identify technical and financial resources for the implementation of conservation practices. The **Conservation Practice Resources Library**, available [here](#), is a searchable database of financial and technical resources that are currently available for producers in the U.S. It contains information from government, non-profit, extension, state planning tools, and many other relevant financial or technical assistance providers and resources. Financial resources include grants, cost-share, loan programs and other incentives available. The database's first areas of focus are on resources for cover cropping, conservation tillage, energy efficiency, nutrient management, and pollinator habitat.

This summer will also see the launch of **FARM Environmental Stewardship Version 3**. FARM ES is integrating a new, process-based model for greenhouse gas accounting: the Ruminant Farm Systems (RuFaS) model. FARM ES will begin using RuFaS as its underlying GHG quantification model with Version 3 this summer. This launch will contain the core elements of the RuFaS model to enable farm-level GHG footprinting and scenario analyses, which help support informed decision-making about the adoption of practices and technologies. Further elements – like enhancements to the energy data inputs and conducting economic analyses – will be added to FARM ES as they become available through the ongoing RuFaS research efforts. With the introduction of FARM ES Version 3, FARM will create feedback forms for farmers and FARM evaluators to provide suggestions. FARM will also host stakeholder webinars to foster discussion about the new platform. This shift will position FARM ES as the key on-farm measurement tool to support U.S. dairy community efforts to help achieve its 2050 environmental stewardship goals.

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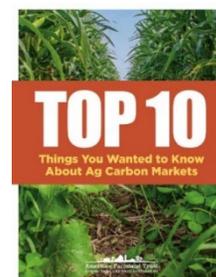
As we build toward the launch of FARM ES V3, we are immensely grateful to Dairy Sustainability Alliance members **Unilever** and **Domino's** for their generous support of the new tool. Both partners are providing funding to support the development of new education and training materials for FARM ES evaluators. The new materials will guide FARM evaluators on using the new tool and leveraging the output for meaningful conversations with farmers. These invaluable educational materials and trainings would not have been possible without the support of Unilever and Domino's.



If you would like to learn more about FARM ES V3 or supporting the platform, please reach out to Nicole Ayache (nayache@nmpf.org)

Carbon Markets Insight from American Farmland Trust

A new consumer-friendly [guidebook](#) on ag carbon markets is available for farmers, ag advisors, and conservation professionals. American Farmland Trust, a national non-profit organization, addresses [10 questions that are top-of-mind](#) for farmers and provides background on how agricultural carbon markets work. The guidebook answers logistical questions about eligibility, data requirements, and contract duration, explains all terms like “offset” and “inset” markets, and lists the qualifying 53 climate-smart practices. It also offers tips for how farmers might make an ag carbon market work for them by stacking private and public sector payments, and considerations for getting into a market now versus waiting for the future.



Sorghum Feed Research to Support Progress Toward U.S. Dairy's 2050 Environmental Goals

Dairy Management Inc. is partnering with the Sorghum Check-off and Texas A&M University on a research project to better understand the impacts of feeding male sterile-BMR sorghum silage to lactating cows. This type of sorghum may be able to meet lactating dairy cows' metabolic needs, with the use of significantly less water for feed production – a major need in water stressed regions. The researchers plan to publish the results at the end of the study.

If you have specific questions about this project or would like to discuss a partnership, please reach out to Jacqi Coleman (jacqi.coleman@dairy.org).

FAO Submission on Biodiversity

U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC), in collaboration with the Innovation Center, answered a recent call to share experiences, best practices and scalable solutions for the integration of biodiversity into agriculture. The call for submissions, issued by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), offered an opportunity to highlight the development of a U.S. dairy-relevant definition of biodiversity, the inclusion of new biodiversity metrics into the U.S. Dairy Stewardship Commitment and the availability of the FARM ES Conservation Practice Questionnaire to support and gather information on practices U.S. dairy farmers are implementing to increase and protect biodiversity. The submission will serve to inform the upcoming [International Symposium "Agriculture, Biodiversity and Food Security: From Commitments to Actions,"](#) and facilitate the technical recommendations for the agricultural sector's commitment to achieving sector-relevant targets.

You can read the full submission [here](#) and view other submissions [here](#).

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about USDEC's efforts at FAO, please contact Janice Giddens at jgiddens@usdec.org.

Call for Submissions: IDF's 3rd Annual Innovation Awards



The International Dairy Federation (IDF) is again seeking nominations for the [IDF Dairy Innovation Awards](#). This is the third edition of the IDF Dairy Innovation Awards, which represent a unique opportunity for innovative actions, programs, and projects to receive global recognition for their contributions to more sustainable dairy production. The second edition the IDF Dairy Innovation Awards was highly competitive, receiving 173 entries from 26 countries. The Innovation Awards include ten categories representing the dairy value chain:

- Innovation in sustainable farming practices: a) environment
- Innovation in sustainable farming practices: b) animal care
- Innovation in sustainable farming practices: c) socio-economic
- Innovation in sustainable processing
- Innovation in sustainable packaging
- Innovation in new product development: a) dairy product with focus on human nutrition
- Innovation in new product development: b) food safety equipment
- Innovation in women empowerment in the dairy sector
- Innovation in climate action
- Innovation in marketing & communication initiative building dairy category

In 2023 U.S. dairy had two finalists, but we are still in search of our first winner. The nomination process is simple, and we are here to help members of the U.S. dairy community who want to submit. If you are interested in applying for the IDF Dairy Innovation Awards, please contact Kelly Sheridan (USDEC) at ksheridan@usdec.org for information. The deadline to submit applications is June 1, but don't delay!

COP28 focused on agriculture, sustainable food systems; U.S. Dairy ensures presence

The 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), held in December 2023, included an unprecedented focus on agriculture and food systems. For the first time, an entire day of the formal program was dedicated to food and agriculture. In addition, 159 countries, including the United States, endorsed the [Emirates Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action](#). The declaration establishes a pathway for countries to include agriculture in their Nationally Determined Contribution, which are nations' individual climate action plans to cut emissions to achieve global targets set out in the Paris Climate Agreement. Though nonbinding and lacking specific agricultural emissions reduction targets, the declaration and the dedication of an entire thematic day to food and agriculture is a good first step and reflects the increasing recognition and interest in the critical role that food and agriculture play in mitigation and adaptations for climate change. Alex Peterson, U.S. dairy farmer and U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) chair, led a U.S. dairy delegation to COP28, supported by USDEC staff. The delegation engaged with thought leaders, policymakers, and other experts from around the world to promote the role of U.S. dairy and trade in delivering sustainable food systems.

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Methane actions

COP28 also saw a series of actions aimed at addressing global methane emissions, with more than \$1 billion in new grant funding for methane action mobilized since COP27 and five new countries joining the U.S. and other nations in the [Global Methane Pledge](#) during a [COP28 Methane Ministerial](#) meeting, pushing the total number to over 155. Countries adopting the pledge agree to take voluntary actions to reduce global methane emissions by at least 30 percent from 2020 levels by 2030 and also to improve greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reporting. The global reduction goal, which is also nonbinding, means adopting countries are not obligated to meet national targets but rather to support collective efforts to achieve a global reduction of at least 30 percent.

Of the new funding, \$200 million will go to the Global Methane Hub to launch their [Enteric Fermentation R&D Accelerator](#). The project, a public-private-philanthropic partnership to scale enteric methane reduction technologies, complements U.S. dairy efforts through the Net Zero Initiative and Greener Cattle Initiative, as well as Global Dairy Platform's Pathways to Dairy Net Zero. The Accelerator aims to address gaps in research and advance existing research, including new and alternative livestock feed additives, tools to breed low-methane livestock, immunological studies for a methane vaccine, enhancing understanding of the rumen biome, and lowering the costs of measurement, essential to generating evidence for regulatory approval and validation of mitigation technologies.

If you have any questions about COP 28, please contact Kelly Sheridan at ksheridan@usdec.org.

Sixth Session of the UN Environmental Assembly

USDEC led U.S. dairy's representation at the sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) hosted by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in late February in Nairobi, Kenya. UNEA, which is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, has increasingly considered topics and themes relevant to the U.S. dairy industry, including policies to prevent plastic pollution, antimicrobial resistance prevention, animal welfare standards, and recommendations intended to deliver more sustainable food systems.

USDEC engaged with likeminded and dissenting stakeholders throughout the Assembly, ensuring fair representation of U.S. dairy producers and exports, and highlighting the role of U.S. dairy and rules-based international trade in delivering sustainable nutrition to consumers around the world. Key messages:

- The importance of engaging farmers and incorporating farmers' voices in the decision-making process on global environmental policies.
- Agriculture – specifically dairy – can provide solutions to some of the world's most challenging environmental problems.
- Trade is a tool to deliver sustainable food systems, and the UN should promote policies that incentivize not hamper food exports.
- Food systems are complex and all production systems/methods can be sustainable, including efficient, feed-based dairy production

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about USDEC's efforts with the UN Environment Programme, please contact Kelly Sheridan at ksheridan@usdec.org.



Care for Our Animals and Communities

FARM Program Updates



The FARM Program has been preparing resource materials for FARM Animal Care Version 5, which will take effect July 1, 2024. The FARM Program also partnered with Hoard's Dairyman this year to label articles both online and in print that meet the FARM Animal Care Continuing Education requirements to make it easier for farmers to learn about animal care best management practices.

Additionally, the FARM Program expanded its voluntary Biosecurity Program with the launch of FARM Biosecurity – Enhanced in late 2023. This program was enriched to protect dairy cattle, build resiliency, and promote future business continuity opportunities in the event of a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak. The FARM Biosecurity – Enhanced Program includes a 45-minute online training that introduces the Secure Milk Supply (SMS) Plan for Continuity of Business and walks users through the steps needed to create their own biosecurity plans. In addition, FARM Biosecurity – Enhanced features an online database where farms can upload their Enhanced Biosecurity Plans and, if they choose to, share their plans with their state officials.

FARM Workforce Development (WFD) gathered feedback this year from participants and its WFD Task Force to align on slight changes to the FARM WFD Evaluation Tool. These minor changes can be expected in FARM WFD Version 2, which is set to launch July 1, 2024.

In addition to new program versions in 2024, the FARM Program will be updating its online database so that participants and evaluators can more easily and efficiently input data and find information and resources.

Member Briefs

- Athian recently [announced](#) the first sale of verified carbon credits in the groundbreaking livestock carbon inssetting marketplace. The credits were generated for [Rumensin](#) and purchased by **Dairy Farmers of America** (DFA), the largest U.S. milk marketing cooperative. The goal is to achieve a 30% reduction by 2030. As part of an industry-wide collaboration on environmental sustainability through the Innovation Center, DFA is a key contributor to the dairy industry's commitment to achieving greenhouse gas neutrality or better by 2025. Beyond Rumensin and feed additives, Athian is also working to develop additional protocols for other sustainable practices.
- **Vanguard Renewables** is [celebrating](#) a decade of clean energy innovation with an accelerated workforce and facility expansion. The company is developing multiple Farm Powered® digesters across the country that will convert food and beverage waste material and dairy manure into Renewable Natural Gas and service almost every major metropolitan market. The company currently operates multiple organics to renewable energy projects in eight states with dozens more in various stages of planning development. Vanguard aims to have more than 100 completed projects by the end of 2028. Vanguard Renewables, along with **Starbucks**, **Unilever**, and **Dairy Farmers of America** launched the Farm Powered Strategic Alliance in 2020. The Alliance, which has grown to nearly 30 cross-industry members, is a collaborative group of leading national and regional brands focused on advancing sustainability, food waste reduction and recycling, expand renewable energy production across the U.S., and support for regenerative agricultural practices.



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Upcoming Events

April	Earth Month	
April 17-18	2024 Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Spring Meeting	Rosemont, IL
April 30-May 1	Dairy Nourishes America Eastern Symposium	Rochester, NY
April 30-May 1	Dairy Plant Food Safety Workshop <i>Hosted by Leprino Foods & Hilmar Cheese</i>	Greeley, CO
June 1	World Milk Day	
July 30-31	Dairy Plant Food Safety Workshop <i>Hosted by Foremost Farms & Sargento Foods</i>	Madison, WI
Oct. 1-2	Dairy Plant Food Safety Workshop <i>Hosted by HP Hood & Wells Enterprises</i>	Batavia, NY
Nov. 18-19	2024 Dairy Sustainability Alliance® Fall Meeting	Minneapolis, MN
Nov. 20-21	2024 Sustainable Agriculture Summit	Minneapolis, MN
Ongoing	Food Safety Basics for Ice Cream Makers Online Training Course	Online Training
Ongoing	Food Safety Basics for Artisan Cheesemakers Online Training Course	Online Training