



## **Dairy West *Farmer Newsletter*** **February 2026**

*This newsletter's primary audience is current Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Washington dairy farmers. Please share with family members and farm employees. Reach out to your local farmer relations staff to receive this directly to your inbox.*

### ***Farmer Spotlight***

In recognition of 2026 being named the International Year of the Woman Farmer, this feature highlights four women dairy farmers, one from each state in the region. Their stories reflect the leadership, stewardship and practical insight that drive dairy forward across all farms, today and into the future.

#### **Meet Adrienne Allen**

Victor Dairy of Tillamook, Oregon

Dairy West Board Member & Oregon Dairy Products Commission Board Member

**Question: How does your perspective as a dairy farmer shape the way you lead, on your farm and beyond?**

"Being a woman in dairy means balancing many roles — farmer, wife and mother — while building a life where family, animals and land are deeply connected. Motherhood has strengthened my commitment to caring for our cows and protecting the land and water we depend on, knowing today's decisions shape the future our children will inherit. I also honor generations of women before me by serving in leadership roles at the state and national level, helping shape dairy policy and support a sustainable future for dairy."





### Meet Nora Doelman

Elma Dairy of Elma, Washington  
Dairy West Board Member & Washington Dairy Products Commission Board Member

**Question: What's one decision you've made recently that's strengthened your farm, and why did it matter?**

"We've invested in expanding our rotational grazing system. Because we farm in a flood plain, our fencing needs to withstand weeks of water flow. In the summer, our beef herd and heifers help clean up fields after silage cutting, which supports soil health, sustains native plantings and strengthens our animal care practices. By expanding and fortifying our fencing, we're able to bring this system to more fields and maintain a balanced, resilient rotation that supports both the land and our livestock."

### Meet Holly Hull

Hull Dairy LLC of Preston, Idaho  
Idaho Dairy Products Commission Board Member

**Question: What's one change you've made in the last year that improved your farm, and what did it teach you?**

"This year, we became much more intentional about record-keeping across the farm. By closely tracking grazing, feed and daily management details, we gained clearer insight into what was working and where adjustments were needed. One surprise was learning that leaving the milk herd on certain pastures an extra day actually improved productivity. Better records have also made inspections faster and decisions more confident. Overall, improved data has helped us manage the land, cows and operation more effectively."



### Meet Sheila Sherwood

Cedar Ridge Farms of Nephi, Utah  
Utah Dairy Commission Board Member

**Question: What's one leadership change you've made on your farm that's made a difference?**

"This year, we introduced short, mandatory "Monday Meetings" for all employees. The goal was simple: make quick course corrections and recognize good work in real time. What we gained was much more. Our team better understands how each role connects to cow care, milk quality and overall farm success. Employees now see the bigger picture and how their work affects others. That shared understanding has strengthened teamwork and reinforced our common goal of taking good care of the cows."

## A Message from the CEO

Dairy West has officially entered a new era. As of January 1, the region now includes Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Washington. This step allows the organization to operate with one unified approach, creating greater efficiency and helping ensure every checkoff dollar is working harder on behalf of farmers across all four states.

Over the past month, Dairy West's functional teams have aligned plans, priorities and budgets for the year ahead. We have also strengthened our bench, welcoming eight new team members in Washington and five in Oregon to support the expanded region. Dairy West is organized around coordinated functional teams working on behalf of farmers to inspire trust, build demand and foster innovation for the dairy industry. Core program teams include business development, marketing and communications, nutrition partnerships and research and innovation, supported by industry relations, strategy and insights and finance and operations. This approach supports consistent, effective execution across the four-state region. You can view the full Dairy West team working on your behalf on the [Dairy West website](#).

This milestone is possible because of the dairy farm families who have supported this vision. The Dairy West team is grateful for the hard work, dedication and forward-thinking leadership that farmers model every day. Our staff is committed to matching that same standard in

service to the region.

In addition, 2026 has been declared as the International Year of the Woman Farmer by the United Nations General Assembly. Dairy West is proud to work with many outstanding women across the region. This newsletter features just a few of their stories.

Lastly, there has been an update to the newsletter cadence to better support farmers' time and attention. This farmer e-newsletter will reach your inbox every other month, and the print farmer newsletter will be mailed twice a year, with the first issue arriving in July. The goal is to keep communications focused, timely and worth the read. If there are questions at any point, you are welcome to reach out directly to me or your local farmer relations staff member.

Sincerely,



Steve Seppi  
CEO, Dairy West

## ***Farmer Updates***

### **Utah Emerging Leaders Session | March 17–18**

Dairy West is launching the Emerging Leaders Program with a Utah-based session designed for dairy farmers from across the state. This event is open to Utah producers and creates space to connect with peers, engage with Dairy West leadership and gain a deeper understanding of how the organization works on behalf of farmers.

#### **Tuesday, March 17**

Participants will gather at the Dairy West Draper office for lunch, followed by interactive discussions, including an overview of Dairy West priorities and budget. The day will wrap up with dinner at Topgolf and an overnight stay in Salt Lake City.

#### **Wednesday, March 18**

Attendees are invited to observe the Joint Board Meeting, with the option to stay for lunch and attend the Utah Dairy Commission meeting.

Dairy farmers interested in attending or learning more are encouraged to contact [Lacey Papageorge](#) to get registered.

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### **Utah's Dairy Convention Sets the Tone for the New Year**

The 2026 Dairy Convention in Provo, Utah brought together more than 100 attendees.

The convention created space for timely updates, thoughtful discussion and strong connection across Utah's dairy community. Keynote speaker Captain Charlie Plumb, a Vietnam War veteran and former POW, shared his story of resilience after nearly six years in captivity. His message left the room inspired and uplifted.

Attendees received updates on several important initiatives, including:

- A look ahead at Dairy West's strategic direction

- Introduction to the [Dairy Protein Institute](#)
- On-farm safety efforts, including the launch of the AED program
- A legislative outlook from Dairy Producers of Utah
- A staff Q&A session, where farmers had the opportunity to engage directly with Dairy West staff

Event photos are available for viewing and downloading [here](#).

Thank you to everyone who joined. Your participation and energy helped make this year's convention a success.



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## New Dietary Guidelines Bring Optimism for Dairy

On January 7, 2026, a new set of Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) were released. These guidelines shape federal nutrition policy and inform programs like the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, WIC and SNAP for the next five years.

The DGAs include several wins for dairy this round and continue to recognize dairy as a nutrient-dense, high-quality food group that supports growth, development and long-term health:

- Dairy remains a distinct food group, with a recommendation of three daily servings
- Full-fat dairy with no added sugars is a recognized source of healthy fats
- Lower-fat and lactose-free dairy options continue to be highlighted
- Plant-based dairy alternatives receive less emphasis than in previous guidelines

Checkoff has invested in more than 80 studies over the past 20 years, specifically focused on full-fat dairy, to help build scientific evidence that these foods play a meaningful role in supporting health and wellness.

### What this means for Dairy West

The nutrition partnerships team is working to update and evolve nutrition education resources to reflect these recommendations. The team is also committed to translating the narrative around full-fat dairy foods across all health stakeholder education and outreach initiatives.

Want to learn more? Visit [realfood.gov](https://realfood.gov), a new interactive website designed to help Americans put the Guidelines into practice.



# New Dietary Guidelines for Americans



realfood.gov

2025-2030

## Business Development

### New E-Commerce Campaign: 2026 Resolutions Fueled by Dairy

To kick off the new year, Dairy West launched the *Fuel Your Fitness* e-commerce campaign on Instacart, highlighting milk, yogurt, cottage cheese and protein powders across retailers in Idaho, Utah, Oregon and Washington.

The campaign was designed to reach health-focused shoppers where decisions are made online. By showing up at the digital shelf, Dairy West reinforced dairy as a trusted source of high-quality protein that supports everyday wellness, recovery and active lifestyles.

Through sponsored search, digital banners and recipe integrations, the campaign helped guide shoppers toward dairy-powered choices at the moment of purchase, turning nutrition inspiration into action.

**Fuel Your Fitness**  
Sponsored

| Product                          | Size            | Price                | Notes             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Kroger Cottage Cheese            | 24 oz - 2 sizes | \$2.50 (reg. \$3.29) | With loyalty card |
| Kroger Cottage Cheese            | 16 oz - 2 sizes | \$2.79               |                   |
| Kroger Cottage Cheese            | 24 oz           | \$2.50 (reg. \$3.29) | With loyalty card |
| Kroger Small Curd Cottage Cheese | 24 oz - 2 sizes | \$2.50 (reg. \$3.29) | With loyalty card |
| Kroger Small Curd Cottage Cheese | 16 oz           | \$2.79               |                   |

### Dairy West Partners with Regional Coffee Chains

Dairy West recently launched two new coffee shop partnerships designed to keep dairy front and center with consumers in everyday routines.

**Grounds for Coffee** (10 locations in Utah) is committed to housing a



chalkboard-style display on their countertops highlighting the quality and value of choosing dairy in coffee beverages. Grounds for Coffee primarily uses milk from Rosehill Dairy and frequently sources from other regional processors. Messaging will refresh quarterly with seasonal themes and dairy education.

**Beans & Brews** (nearly 90 locations in Idaho, Utah, Texas, Nevada, Colorado, Missouri and Arizona) partnered with Dairy West and Dairy Management West to spotlight its 20-gram protein lattes during January, meeting growing consumer demand for higher-protein options.

Together, these partnerships showcase how dairy supports healthy lifestyles while building trust and demand through simple, frequent choices. They also serve as a scalable model as Dairy West continues growing similar foodservice relationships across the region.



### **Dairy Sees Growth in Sales and Perception**

Progressive Dairy recently published an article highlighting how national and regional checkoff efforts are translating into measurable results, from stronger category sales to improved consumer confidence. The data shows dairy is winning in the cart, with targeted programs and partnerships turning insights into action.

- **Category growth:** Dollar and unit sales increased in eight of the top ten dairy segments, with dairy ranking among the top 15 of 170 food and beverage categories for both absolute and percentage growth.
- **Dairy outperforming alternatives:** Real dairy delivers more than seven times the sales of non-dairy alternatives and grew nearly six percent year over year, while alternatives declined.
- **Measured perception lift:** The 2024 Dairy Perceptions Tracker showed continued gains. Consumers who love dairy's taste and feel it is "for them" increased from 54% to 61%. Agreement that dairy is a nutritious part of a healthy, balanced diet rose from 48% to 52%.

Across the checkoff network, programs remain focused on measuring and sustaining these positive shifts in dairy sales and perception. In 2026, efforts will continue tracking big-picture metrics while refining how regional programs, including Dairy West initiatives, contribute to these outcomes.

For more information on dairy sales and trust results from 2025, [read the full Progressive Dairy article.](#)



## U.S. Speedskating Requested Milk in Milan

The U.S. Speedskating team is fueled by dairy as they compete in the 2026 Winter Olympic Games. The team requested Darigold FIT chocolate milk while in Milan to support their training and recovery on the road.

Dairy West staff helped coordinate the logistics so the product arrived in Milan when the team did. This request is a strong example of how dairy continues to earn trust and credibility in high-performance nutrition.

Dairy West is proud to sponsor the U.S. Speedskating team (based in Kearns, Utah) and support their nutrition so dairy stays top of mind.

Be sure to cheer on the speedskaters this Olympics knowing they're backed by dairy. Go Team USA!

## Marketing

### New Consumer Campaign Highlights Dairy's Protein Power

A new consumer-facing campaign is launching later this month across digital channels, with a clear focus on protein. The campaign reinforces dairy as a simple, trusted source of high-quality protein for today's families.

With growing confusion around food and nutrition, the message cuts through the noise by reminding consumers that dairy protein is real, familiar and easy to feel good about. The creative features everyday family food moments and speaks to parents who want to nourish their kids without overthinking every meal.

The campaign positions dairy as:

- A reliable, high-quality protein made from simple ingredients
- Food that tastes good, satisfies kids and fits naturally into daily life
- A smart, uncomplicated choice in a crowded nutrition landscape

The campaign will begin appearing later this month across digital platforms in Dairy West markets.

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### Milk & Cookies: Local Girl Scouts Help Promote the Iconic Duo

Dairy West is teaming up with the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage to celebrate one of the most legendary pairings: milk and cookies. This partnership supports Girl Scout cookie booths across Southern Idaho, Northern Nevada and Eastern Oregon, while keeping fluid milk top of mind for shoppers.

Through this promotion, Dairy West provided Girl Scout troops with fun, eye-catching assets that fit the Girl Scouts' playful style, including tablecloths, buttons and tabletop signs reminding customers that you can't have cookies without milk. Darigold is also supporting the effort by providing milk coupons, helping turn cookie sales into milk purchases, too.

Only 100 promotional kits were produced for this first-year pilot, making it a unique opportunity





to test how pairing milk with a beloved tradition can drive demand. The goal is simple: encourage consumers to think about milk when they buy cookies and reinforce dairy's role in everyday moments.

If you're in the Silver Sage region, keep an eye out for Girl Scout booths using these assets. If the program proves successful, Dairy West will explore expanding this partnership to additional regions in the future.

## Mark Your Calendars

**February 24-26** | DMI Board Meeting | Phoenix, Arizona

**March 9-10** | Oregon Dairy Farmers Convention | Salem, Oregon

**March 17** | Dairy West Emerging Leaders Program | Salt Lake City, Utah

**March 18** | Promotion Board Meetings | Salt Lake City, Utah

## Dairy West Farmer Resources

### Farm Tour Materials

Visit the Dairy West website to [request educational material and swag](#) to give during a farm tour. To guarantee you will receive materials in time, please request at least two weeks prior to the event.

Farm Tour Materials

### Farmer Portal

Learn more about Dairy West's resources and offerings by visiting the [farmer portal](#) on the Dairy West website.

Farmer Portal

### Product Reimbursement

This program supports the community engagement efforts of Idaho and Utah dairy farm families by offering unlimited reimbursement for on-farm tours and a \$400 reimbursement per permit for dairy products purchased for community events. Dairy West reimburses dairy farmers in full for dairy products given during on-farm tours.

To be reimbursed, [please submit itemized receipts](#) through the Dairy West website within 30 days of purchase. Be sure to only include reimbursable dairy products on your receipts.

If you have any questions about Dairy West's product reimbursements, please contact [Lacey Papageorge](#).

Product Reimbursement

## National Dairy Industry Resources



DMI Website



Podcast Episodes



NMPF Website



IDFA Website



MilkPEP Website



USDEC Website

Dairy West | 743 North Touchmark Avenue, Meridian, ID 83642

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