DAIRY WEST

The Milkhouse: Digital Edition

OCTOBER 2026

Across the Dairy West region, dairy farmers are finding meaningful ways to connect with their communities, answer questions and help people better understand where their food comes from. This issue highlights farmers who are opening their farms, showing up in local schools and events and creating opportunities for people to experience dairy firsthand.

If you're engaging with your community, Dairy West would love to support you! Connect with your farmer relations representative to learn more about resources available to you, including dairy product reimbursement, the on-farm tour grant and more. Visit the farmer portal to explore available programs and resources.

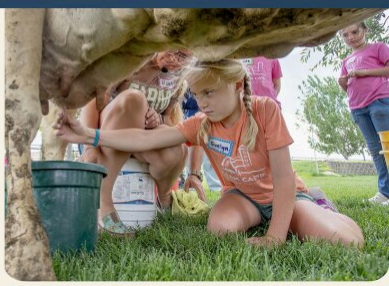
Oregon: Drew Johnson, Santiam Dairy

Drew Johnson brings dairy education directly to students in his community. For Turner Elementary School's Career Day, Drew brought a dairy calf to the school, giving approximately 700 students the chance to interact with a farm animal while learning about dairy farming and the many careers that support the industry. He talked with students about

opportunities in animal care, nutrition, veterinary medicine, mechanics, technology, business, transportation, processing, marketing and more.

Drew then helped take that learning one step further by welcoming third-grade students to Santiam Dairy for an on-farm tour. The visit gave students a chance to see a working dairy firsthand and connect what they learned at school with the people, animals and work behind their food. By starting with an approachable experience at the school and following it with a farm visit, Drew is helping local students build a stronger connection to dairy and agriculture.

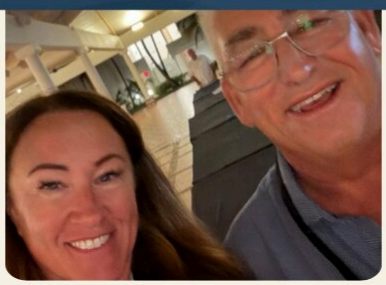
Idaho: Siska Reece, Moo-Riah Dairy



Siska Reece and her family invite children onto Moo-Riah Dairy to experience what it's like to be a dairy farmer for a day. Through Farm Camp, school field trips and other hands-on experiences, kids get involved in farm activities such as riding a tractor, feeding and washing cows, learning about milking and even seeing a calf being born. Rather than simply telling children where their food comes from, Siska gives them an opportunity to experience agriculture firsthand.

For Siska, opening the farm is a way to help children better understand the work that goes into producing their food and build an appreciation for agriculture. These experiences also give kids a chance to ask questions and interact directly with the people caring for the animals and producing their food. That commitment to agricultural education and community involvement helped earn the Reece family recognition as the 2026 Canyon County Farm Family of the Year.

Washington: Case VanderMeulen, Coulee Flats Dairy

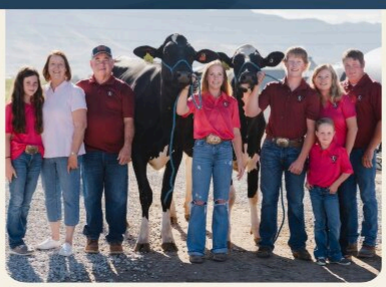


Case VanderMeulen and his family make community engagement a regular part of life at Coulee Flats Dairy. The farm welcomes more than 50 school tours each year, giving students and community members a firsthand look at how a modern dairy operates, how farmers care for their animals and where their food comes from. Lisa also represents the farm through the

Adopt a Cow program, helping bring dairy education into classrooms throughout the 2026-2027 school year.

The VanderMeulens stay involved beyond the farm, too. They provide dairy products for school events, support Special Olympics participants, purchase youth sports uniforms and buy animals at local youth sales to support young people involved in agriculture. They also support and serve on the board of the Basin City Rodeo. Through these efforts, the family is finding a variety of ways to connect with their neighbors, support local youth and keep agriculture visible throughout the greater North Franklin community.

Utah: Daniel & Amy Buttars, Butter-Dell Dairy



Daniel and Amy Buttars and their family use a favorite fair treat to start conversations about dairy. Each year after the dairy show at the Utah State Fair, their family joins other dairy farm families involved with the Intermountain Holstein Association in handing out a full pallet of Gossner shelf-stable chocolate milk to fairgoers. Using Dairy West's educational signage and product reimbursement program, the simple giveaway creates an opportunity for farmers to interact directly with people visiting the dairy animals and answer questions about cows, dairy farming and the foods they produce.

For Daniel and Amy, those one-on-one conversations are what make the experience meaningful. Their children also get involved, talking with people from different backgrounds and helping answer questions about dairy. By meeting fairgoers where they already are and using something as simple as chocolate milk to start a conversation, the Buttars family is helping people better understand the care and dedication behind dairy farming.

A Message From the CEO

Does this newsletter look a little different to you? That is because we are excited to officially begin rolling out Dairy West's new brand.

Our new look was created with dairy farmers at the center and designed to help us connect with consumers and tell the story of dairy in a fresh, relevant way. You will see more personality in the design, including a herd of cows, more cow spots and colors inspired by the journey from farm to table. At the heart of it all is our Real Good message, reflecting the care, quality and authenticity behind dairy and the farmers who make it possible.

The new brand comes at an important time for Dairy West. Our full team recently gathered in Portland for our annual all-team meeting, where we spent time looking at what is working, where we can improve and how we can take our best ideas and bring them to scale across the region. That work continues this month as our boards come together around our 2027 budget and plan. We want to be disciplined about where we invest and stay focused on the work that creates the greatest value for dairy farmers.

There is also a lot to look forward to in the months ahead. We will have several opportunities to gather with farmers in person, including the Dairy West & Idaho Dairymen's Association Joint Annual Meeting in November, followed by the Washington Annual Meeting in December and Utah Dairy Convention in January. I hope many of you will join us.

At the national level, DMI recently named Corey Scott its next president and CEO, succeeding Barbara O'Brien. Corey brings a lot of dairy and checkoff experience, most recently as president and CEO of Midwest Dairy. I have worked closely with Corey over the past several years and have built a great rapport with her. I am looking forward to working with her in this new role and continuing to strengthen the partnership between Dairy West and DMI. Read more about the announcement here.

As we head further into fall and toward the end of the year, I am grateful for the farmers who continue to show up for their communities, share their stories and help guide our work. You will see several examples in this issue of farmers across our region doing just that and helping others better understand dairy.

Thank you for your trust and for the opportunity to represent you.

Steve Seppi, CEO

Farmer Updates

ODPC Meeting Notice

The Oregon Dairy Products Commission (ODPC) will hold a regular meeting and budget hearing on November 10, 2026, from 10 a.m. to noon MT. The budget hearing will begin at 10:20 a.m. MT.

Agenda items include a financial report, industry updates, appointment of members to the Dairy West board and adoption of the ODPC 2027 budget, operational plan and contracts. The commission will meet in executive session to review exempt public records under ORS 192.660(2)(f).

Oregon Dairy Council/Oregon Dairy Products Commission meetings are held in a hybrid format as part of Dairy West's regular meetings. Attendees can participate via Zoom, at the Dairy West meeting location or at the Tigard, Oregon, office.

Please contact agoetze@ordairy.org for access details and the meeting agenda.

Oregon Producer Meetings

The Oregon Dairy Farmers Association and Oregon Dairy Products Commission co-host area meetings each year, giving dairy farmers an opportunity to hear program updates, connect with fellow producers and discuss what's happening in Oregon dairy. All producers are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Upcoming meetings include:

- Boardman Area Social — November 3 | River Lodge at Two Barrels Taps and Grill
- Malheur County Area Meeting — November 13 | Willowcreek Store
- Salem Area Meeting — January 6 | Farm Bureau Building
- Tillamook Area Meeting — January 7 | Alderbrook Hall

Reach out to info@ordairy.org for more information.

Nutrition Partnerships

State Tournament Tickets Available to Dairy Farmers

As part of Dairy West's partnerships supporting high school activities across the region, dairy farmers have access to tickets or passes for select state tournament events in Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

Eligible dairy farmers can find event information and request tickets or passes through the Dairy West Farmer Portal. Availability and the request process vary by state.

Please submit your request at least seven days before the event to allow enough time for processing.

This is a benefit available to dairy farmers through Dairy West's partnerships, providing opportunities to enjoy state high school activities while supporting programs that connect dairy with students, families and communities across our region.

Request Tickets

Women's Wellness Symposium Connects Health Professionals Across the Northwest

Dairy West partnered with Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) to host its inaugural Women's Wellness Symposium, bringing together 60 health professionals and next-generation health students from across the Northwest. The event created an opportunity to share evidence-based nutrition information and ensure dairy is part of conversations about women's health throughout the lifespan.

Sessions explored nutrition from preconception and pregnancy through midlife and healthy aging, as well as the hormonal biology behind weight-loss resistance in midlife women. Following the event, more than 90% of post-event evaluation respondents agreed or completely agreed that dairy foods are important for women of all ages, including during critical stages such as the first 1,000 days, pregnancy and menopause.

By building relationships with trusted health professionals, Dairy West is helping ensure dairy and its nutritional benefits remain part of the guidance consumers receive about health and nutrition. Looking ahead, Dairy West plans to bring similar educational experiences to other major metro areas across the region, partnering with additional health systems to expand the reach of dairy nutrition education.

Business Development

Jacksons Promotion Helps Drive Cheese Sales

Dairy West is partnering with Jacksons Food Stores on an in-store promotion designed to increase cheese sales and encourage consumers to choose dairy while on the go. The promotion runs August 26 through October 27 at participating Jacksons locations.

The promotion pairs two popular convenience-store snacks: cheese and jerky. Shoppers who purchase two participating Tillamook cheddar snacks receive a free Jacksons jerky stick. In-

store signage promotes the offer near both products, helping put cheese in front of consumers at the point of purchase.

By working with retailers and dairy processors on promotions like this, Dairy West helps increase dairy visibility, encourage additional purchases and find new ways to move more dairy through the marketplace.

Foodservice Partnerships Put Dairy on Menus Across the Region

Dairy West is working with restaurant and foodservice partners to keep dairy front and center with consumers through seasonal promotions and limited-time menu offerings.

Beans & Brews is featuring a lineup of fall beverages through November 4, including Hot Honey Lattes and a Pumpkin White Mocha, giving consumers seasonal opportunities to enjoy dairy.

Burgerville launched a limited-time Pickled Pepper Cheeseburger on October 5 featuring Asadero Tres Chiles cheese from Don Froylan Creamery in Salem, Oregon.

Beginning October 19, **Red Robin** will partner with Dairy West on another limited-time offer through the holidays featuring cheese from the Dairy West region.

These partnerships are one way Dairy West works with foodservice operators to keep dairy relevant on menus, inspire new uses for dairy products and ultimately increase demand for dairy.

Chicken, Cheese, Please! Competition Encourages More Cheese on Menus

Chicken is a staple on restaurant menus, but pairing it with cheese is an opportunity that's often overlooked. Dairy West is partnering with Midwest Dairy and Dairy Management Inc. to inspire chefs to get creative with chicken and cheese.

The Chicken, Cheese, Please! competition is currently underway, challenging chefs to develop innovative dishes featuring chicken and cheese, with cash prizes for the winners. Through a partnership with Chef's Roll, the competition is reaching more than 30,000 chefs across the country, helping showcase new ways to incorporate cheese into popular chicken dishes and ultimately drive more demand for dairy.

Stay tuned for the competition results in the December e-newsletter!

Australia Trade Mission Builds Export Opportunities for Regional Dairy

Dairy West recently supported Tillamook and High Desert Milk in connecting with prospective international buyers during a USDA Agribusiness Trade Mission and Fine Food Australia. Cheeses from across the Dairy West region were also showcased at the USDEC reception “The Great American Cheese Roadtrip to Australian Tables” with Tillamook and Rogue Creamery representing Oregon, High Desert Milk representing Idaho and Beehive Cheese representing Utah.

While sales results are not yet available, participating processors reported valuable buyer connections and strong interest in dairy foods and ingredients from our region, with follow-up conversations underway. By helping processors build relationships in growing international markets, Dairy West is working to create new opportunities and demand for dairy products from our region.

Marketing & Communications

New Stewardship Campaign Highlights the Care Behind Dairy

Dairy West launched a new consumer campaign on September 14 across Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Washington, centered on a simple idea: good dairy starts with good care.

The campaign shows consumers how stewardship is part of the everyday work of dairy farming, from caring for cows and land to thoughtfully managing resources and making decisions with the future in mind.

The campaign brings that story together through the message: Real Care. Real Purpose. Real Good.

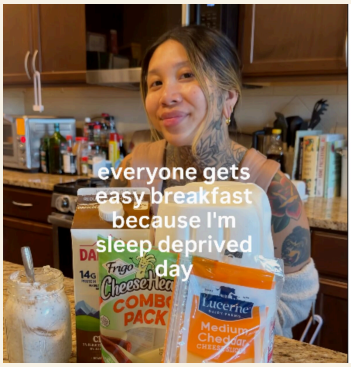
Consumers will see the campaign across Facebook and Instagram, YouTube, streaming TV, streaming audio and other media throughout the region. The goal is to build awareness and strengthen positive perceptions of dairy by helping consumers better understand the care, responsibility and purpose behind the dairy foods they enjoy.

View the campaign visuals here!

On Social

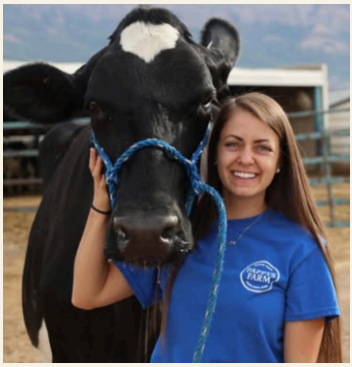
Meet Ethan Clark, a sixth-generation dairy farmer. For Ethan, dairy farming is more than a job. It's a legacy.

View Post



My busy mom of three hack: dairy. This is my low-effort way to get a nutritious breakfast on the table.

View Post



We caught up with Lexie Papageorge on the farm to talk about what it takes to farm 365 days a year.

View Post

Upcoming Events

- November 3: Boardman Area Social | River Lodge at Two Barrels Taps and Grill
- November 10: Dairy West & State Promotion Board Meetings | Boise, ID
- November 13: Malheur County Area Meeting | Willowcreek Store
- January 6: Salem Area Meeting | Farm Bureau Building
- January 7: Tillamook Area Meeting | Alderbrook Hall

Dairy West Resources

Need support? We're here to help.

Dairy West's farmer relations team is available to answer questions, connect you with resources and help you make the most of your dairy checkoff investment.

Farmer Relations Team

- **Bryce Chambers**, Director of Industry Relations
  bchambers@dairywest.com | 435-992-4201
- **Celina Matuk Sarinana**, Manager – Farmer Relations & Training (Idaho)
  cmatuk@dairywest.com | 520-450-0366
- **Allison Pratt**, Manager – Farmer Relations (Oregon)
  apratt@dairywest.com | 503-910-6549
- **Lacey Papageorge**, Manager – Farmer Relations (Utah)
  lpapageorge@dairywest.com | 208-869-0777
- **Kaysha Keel**, Manager – Farmer Relations (Washington)
  kkeel@dairywest.com | 425-567-4313

Farmer Resources

Visit the Dairy West Farmer Portal to access resources and programs available to dairy farmers across the region, including:

- Product reimbursement
- Farm tour materials, swag and educational resources
- Grant writing support
- On-farm training opportunities
- Signage and promotional materials
- Community outreach resources
- Additional tools and information for dairy farmers

Visit the Farmer Portal

Thank you for reading!

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.

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