

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

WASHINGTON DAIRY COMMISSION



Washington
DAIRY
NOW PART OF DAIRY WEST



A LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

In 2025, the Washington Dairy team remained focused on our four core priorities—reputation, sustainability, innovation, and exports—continuing to build trust in dairy while driving demand at home and abroad.

The industry faced ongoing challenges, including milk price volatility, inflation, and global trade uncertainty. Locally, producers managed increased regulatory requirements, high input costs, and continued investment in processing infrastructure, contributing to lower pay prices.

Despite ongoing pressures, the outlook for dairy remains strong. Growing global demand for dairy protein, combined with new processing capacity and expanded trade agreements in Southeast Asia, positions Washington producers for future growth. Dairy consumption rebounded in both volume and value as inflation eased, and Washington State exports grew by 22 percent year over year.

In response, we advanced targeted marketing, innovation, and sales initiatives to position Washington dairy as a preferred choice, while supporting value-added product development in cheese, butter, and dairy proteins.

This year also marked an important step forward, as Washington was approved to join Idaho, Utah, and Oregon in the Dairy West partnership. By coming together, we are strengthening our collective voice and creating more opportunities to deliver meaningful value back to farmers through expanded programs, partnerships, and market access.

Thank you for your continued trust as we work on your behalf to strengthen the future of Washington dairy.



Celeste Piette, Manager
celeste@wadairy.org

2023-2025 CROSS-CHECKOFF OUTCOMES & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

TRUST: <i>to establish dairy as the preferred choice</i>	SALES: <i>to grow incremental U.S. dairy sales</i>
REPUTATION Revitalize dairy's image and relevance as a source of human nourishment and societal and planetary health.	INNOVATION Develop technology-powered breakthrough science and innovations that advance U.S. dairy's wellness AND product leadership.
SUSTAINABILITY Demonstrate that dairy is an environmental solution—backed by science and proof—and economically additive for farmers, markets and society.	EXPORTS Ensure U.S. dairy is a growing, consistent and preferred supplier in key markets globally.

As dairy farmers, 2025 brought both challenges and opportunities for our industry. Through it all, you continued to show the steady commitment and care that sustain Washington dairy. Your work on the farm each day is the foundation of our industry's strength and long-term success.

Your Washington dairy staff worked on behalf of all of us—executing strategies and programs to strengthen demand, protect our reputation and build value for our industry. With an engaged board providing oversight and direction, we remained focused on ensuring your Checkoff investment delivered meaningful results.

A significant milestone this year was Washington's approval to join Idaho, Utah and Oregon as partners in Dairy West. As this partnership takes effect, it positions us to strengthen our regional voice, expand strategic partnerships and drive even greater impact for dairy farmers across the West in the years ahead.

I'm proud of what we accomplished together in 2025 and optimistic about the opportunities ahead. Thank you for your continued commitment to our industry and for the opportunity to serve alongside you. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or ideas.



Jason Vander Kooy, Board Chair
jvanderkooy@wadairy.org

PRIORITY: REPUTATION

Trust continues to anchor our work, guiding efforts to position Washington dairy as a nutritious, sustainable and preferred choice for consumers. In 2025, we focused on **building confidence in dairy with Millennial parents** while **sustaining relevance among Gen Z** by strengthening connections between farmers, families, and communities through **strategic digital campaigns, media partnerships, creator collaborations, and authentic on-farm storytelling**.

Parenting-focused outreach reinforced dairy's role in childhood nutrition, while digital-first storytelling and engaging collaborations supported ongoing connection with younger audiences. Collectively, these efforts aimed to **strengthen confidence in dairy's nutritional value and responsible production practices, reinforcing Washington dairy as a trusted, everyday choice** for consumers today and in the future.

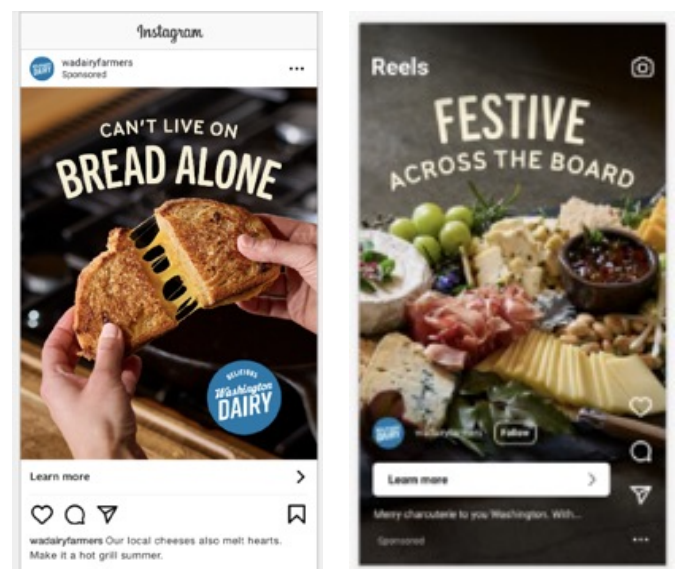
DIGITAL MEDIA

Media Campaigns

In 2025, our integrated advertising strategy **reinforced Washington dairy's relevance by elevating its core benefits—taste, nutrition, and sustainability**—across key consumer touchpoints. Digital and social media placements delivered targeted video and display content designed to build awareness and drive engagement among priority audiences.

The flagship series, *House Special to Home Table*, continued our partnership with Chef Noah Galuten as he visited some of Washington's top restaurants to gain inspiration from local chefs and **demonstrate how locally sourced dairy can translate from restaurant-quality dishes to approachable meals at home**. Overall, our **campaign generated 41.2 million impressions, 5.7 million video views, and more than 813,000 social engagements**.

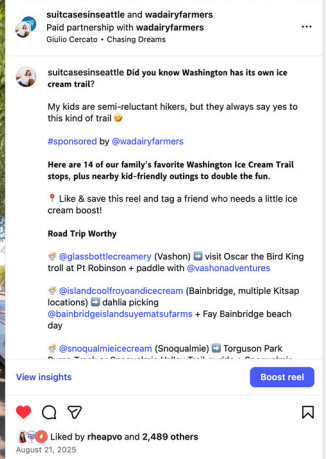
Brand Impact Study results showed **measurable lift across key indicators, including +4% awareness, +4.6% consideration, and +2.2% purchase intent, reinforcing the campaign's effectiveness in strengthening consumer connection and intent**.



Brand Ambassador Program

Influencer partnerships continued to play a critical role in building reach and engagement in 2025, with a strategic **focus on Millennial parents** while maintaining **key Gen Z creator relationships** aligned with national trends and the First 1,000 Days initiative. A **balanced mix of long-standing partners and new voices delivered authentic, locally relevant storytelling** that highlighted where Washington dairy comes from, its nutritional value, and approachable ways to enjoy it as part of everyday life.

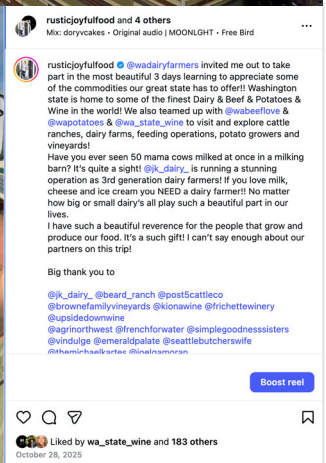
Eight creators produced 20 pieces of content that reached more than 427k accounts and delivered a 3.9% engagement rate, outperforming industry benchmarks. Performance peaked during Summer and Back-to-School, reinforcing these seasonal moments as priority windows for future influencer collaboration.



WA Agriculture Creator House Experience

The 2025 Creator House Experience was a three-day **immersive influencer event held in partnership with Washington State Wine, Potato, and Beef Commissions. Five trusted creators—including chefs, cookbook authors, and local business owners—toured farms, ranches, and vineyards** to meet farmers and learn what makes Washington agriculture unique. The group visited J&K Dairy in Sunnyside, exploring operations from calf hutches to the milking parlor. The experience concluded with a hands-on cooking class featuring commodities highlighted throughout the tour. Dairy was represented by cookbook author and restaurant owner Danielle Kartes, a recurring guest on The Kelly Clarkson Show.

The program **generated 9 Instagram Reels (two paid placements and seven additional collaborative features) and more than 80 Instagram Stories, resulting in 75.8K impressions and an average of 8% engagement rate on Reels.**



EXPERIENTIAL



Whatcom this Whey Dairy Tours

2025 marked the **4th annual Whatcom This Whey Dairy Tours, held in celebration of June Dairy Month.** This community event gives consumers a firsthand look at how local dairy farms operate and how the foods we all love — milk, cheese, ice cream, yogurt, and more — are produced, starting at the farm.

This year, we welcomed **over 1,000 attendees, with nine farms and local shops participating, generating more than \$10,000 in direct sales.** The event continues to **build strong community awareness through a multi-channel promotional campaign,** including flyers distributed at local businesses, community events, and farmers markets, along with targeted social media and radio advertising.

Chef Tour in Whatcom County

Last September, we **hosted seven chefs and distributors for an immersive tour through Whatcom County's dairy country.** The group visited **Edaleen Dairy Farm** to see milk production firsthand, stopped at **Ferndale Farmstead** to learn more about processing, and wrapped up the day at **Twin Sisters Creamery** with a thoughtfully curated wine-and-cheese pairing.

Designed to **connect culinary professionals more deeply with the ingredients they use every day,** the experience delivered meaningful results—sparking **new product placements, opening distribution channel opportunities, and inspiring chefs to host their own dairy-focused events** after their day in learning all about what makes Washington dairy so special.



Taste Washington

Washington dairy products were proudly featured throughout the **state's largest food and wine festival, Taste Washington,** last March. The event welcomed **over 8,000 attendees** and **highlighted seven Washington cheesemakers** showcasing their products. Through **chef demonstrations, culinary booth partnerships, and a popular cheese passport program,** guests experienced local dairy at every turn.

Our efforts led to **collaborations with five culinary partners, who served more than 13,000 bites** featuring products from **six Washington processors**—bringing the best of our state's dairy directly to festivalgoers.



NUTRITION RESOURCES

Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Watch Me Grow Program



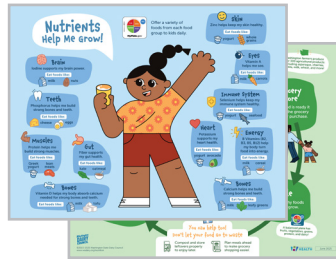
In continuation of our work with the DOH, **four of our resources** were deployed to **over 80k families** throughout **WA State with children aged 6 months to 5.5 years old**. The resources **emphasize the essential role dairy plays in early childhood development**. They are available on the DOH website and will be distributed to families across Washington state through the Watch Me Grow program throughout the year.



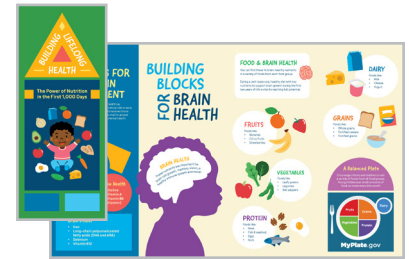
INFANT FEEDING GUIDE
Age: 6 months



THINK, DRINK, GROW
Age: 18 months



NUTRIENTS HELP ME GROW
Age: 5.5 years



THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS
Age: 9 months

SCHOOLS CONNECTIONS

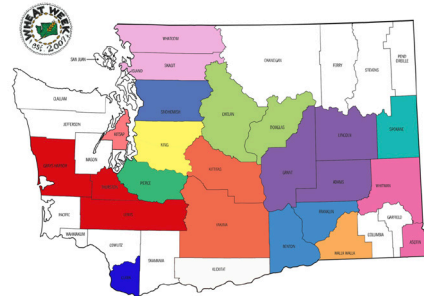
Wheat Week Integration



Through our partnership with Wheat Week, **22,658 students across Washington** were reached in 2025. The curriculum was also expanded to include **new dairy-on-the-farm videos**, helping students better understand how dairy is produced and its role in Washington's agriculture.

Fun Takeaway:

Students love learning about cow manure!



K-12 Start Strong Grants

Through our Start Strong Grant program that supports school meals across Washington state, we **awarded 16 grants; 6 grants supported smoothie programs and 10 grants supported dairy refrigeration**. These grants reinforce our commitment to fueling students with **fresh dairy options** and **maintaining dairy's role in school meal programs**.

Smart Swaps

Bri represented Washington Dairy on the Menu Planning Smart Swaps strategy team, **supporting school nutrition professionals as they adapt to updated nutrition standards while preserving dairy's role in delivering flavor, nutrition, and student satisfaction.** The initiative produced **10 new recipes** and **15 revised recipes, three two-week menu cycles, and three training videos** plus a School Nutrition Association–sponsored **webinar** to help operators implement the strategies.

PARTNERSHIPS

Washington Interscholastic Activities Association



Continuing our partnership with WIAA, we built on our established digital presence by integrating **dairy messaging across the WIAA website and social channels**, enabling us to **connect directly with student-athletes and parents** throughout the year.

In collaboration with our Central Washington University nutrition fellow, we **developed targeted content for WIAA student-athletes**, sharing it across multiple digital channels to **support education around fueling and recovery**. We also **engaged student-athletes and coaches by reinforcing dairy's role in performance and recovery, with ongoing interest in lactose-free options underscoring dairy's importance for a wide range of athletes.**

Additionally, we **facilitated connections with Smith Brothers, who activated at select state championships** to promote their business and support dairy messaging.

Year-round campaigns continued to **emphasize hydration, recovery, and refueling, strengthening dairy's relevance in athletic performance.**

PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

In 2025, sustainability continued to guide **Washington dairy's commitment to building a resilient future for producers and the communities they serve.** Building on the progress made in 2024, we further strengthened research initiatives, broadened producer participation in sustainability programs, and deepened collaboration across the industry to accelerate measurable results. Through ongoing collaboration with producers and key industry partners, we are **advancing practical, science-based strategies that support both environmental responsibility and long-term economic success.**

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS



Washington Sustainable Dairy Collaborative

In 2025, the Washington Dairy Commission, Washington State Dairy Federation, Darigold, and the Northwest Dairy Association continued advancing Pathways for Change with a strong focus on practical, on-farm solutions. **Efforts centered on the highest-impact opportunities across feed, manure, and energy – including cover crops, improved nutrient management, reduced tillage, precision feeding, feed additives, solids separation, covered lagoons with flaring, anaerobic digesters, hot water heat recovery, and solar installations.** These initiatives aim to help producers reduce emissions while strengthening operational efficiency and long-term resilience.

Interest in anaerobic digesters remained high, particularly for their nutrient management and greenhouse gas reduction benefits. At the same time, producers point to real challenges: high upfront costs, uncertain revenue streams, and the need for workable models for mid-sized farms. **Many are also exploring co-digestion opportunities, while seeking clearer permitting pathways, consistent crediting frameworks, and public investment or revenue-sharing tools that make these projects financially viable and accessible to more farms.**



Lasso-WA Dairy Commission Partnership

Building on the pilot launched in 2024, the Lasso Grant Program continued in 2025 with strong producer engagement and measurable results. This year, a total of **12 grant proposals were submitted**. At year's end, **four proposals have been awarded, securing \$150,000 in grant funding for sustainability and equipment investments, with six additional proposals totaling more than \$3.4 million still pending across state and regional funding programs.**

The program continues to provide **hands-on grant-writing assistance** that helps producers compete for funding and advance on-farm sustainability projects with greater confidence and success.



ADVANCING RESEARCH & PLANNING



WSU Assistant Professor & Dairy Specialist

In 2025, we advanced our investment in sustainability research through funding support for the successful **recruitment of Dr. Addison Carroll, PhD, as Assistant Professor and Dairy Specialist at Washington State University.** This tenure-track faculty position **strengthens applied research and extension programs focused on nutrient management, water conservation, greenhouse gas mitigation, and precision agriculture.**

Through this partnership, Dr. Carroll's work will deliver practical, science-based solutions that help Washington dairy producers improve efficiency, enhance environmental stewardship, and reduce their carbon footprint.



Path ahead (Research):



PRIORITY: INNOVATION

Innovation is a core strategy for driving dairy sales and strengthening Washington Dairy’s presence across both traditional and emerging markets. Through **strategic retail partnerships, targeted promotions, and digital commerce expansion**, we worked to **increase value, volume, and consumer access to local dairy products**.

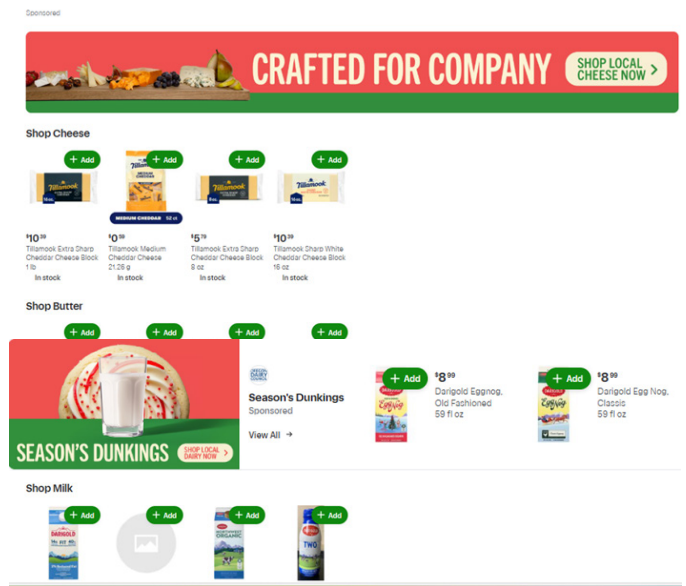
In 2025, this included activation of an Instacart Holiday Promotion to capture seasonal demand, continued momentum with Eggnog Nation in partnership with Smith Brothers, and support for Darigold’s new Pasco plant, which expands processing capacity and market opportunities for Washington dairy.

CHANNEL SALES

Instacart

Our Q4 Instacart holiday campaign (November–December) strategically promoted **key seasonal dairy categories, including milk, eggnog, whipping cream, cheese, and butter**, at peak holiday purchasing moments. **With an \$85,000 investment, the campaign generated \$1,023,092 in attributable sales, delivering a strong return on ad spend (ROAS) of \$11.98.**

In addition to driving overall category growth, the campaign resulted in an **incremental 259,681 pounds of milk sold, reinforcing dairy’s central role in holiday meals and traditions**. By leveraging Instacart’s targeted digital platform, we **reached high-intent shoppers at the point of purchase, efficiently converting seasonal demand into measurable sales** impact and strengthening dairy’s share of basket during a competitive retail period.



PARTNERSHIPS

Eggnog Nation



In 2025, we proudly continued our partnership with Smith Brothers Farms and Food Lifeline to spread holiday cheer while giving back to families in need. During a two-week December promotion, **every eggnog purchase through Smith Brothers’ home delivery service triggered a matched milk donation to Food Lifeline.**

We provided strategic marketing support to amplify the campaign, including coordinated promotional efforts and engaging social media content that highlighted the give-back component and encouraged consumer participation. The campaign generated strong customer engagement and seasonal excitement, **driving incremental eggnog sales while meaningfully increasing access to nutritious dairy for food-insecure families across the region.**



Smith Brothers Brand Positioning



To support the Smith Brothers brand refresh, Smith Brothers **conducted comprehensive market research to inform packaging updates and overall brand positioning**. We partnered in this effort by providing support and collaboration throughout the process to help **ensure the refreshed packaging aligned with consumer preferences and reinforced dairy's premium, local positioning**.

Consumer testing of the new packaging showed strong positive response, and the **refreshed design contributed to a 7% increase in sales** during the launch period, **demonstrating the value of data-driven brand investment and collaborative industry support**.



Darigold B2B Partnership



We supported Darigold's refreshed Business-to-Business sales tools to strengthen their effectiveness in key sales channels. Through strategic collaboration and investment, we helped **modernize sales materials and messaging** to better communicate product quality, innovation, sustainability commitments, and the value of regional dairy.

The updated tools **equip Darigold's sales team with insight-driven, professional resources that enhance buyer engagement and support new distribution opportunities** in competitive market environments. This investment ensures Darigold is positioned with compelling materials that drive growth and elevate the perception of Northwest dairy across key business audiences.



INDUSTRY-LEADING PROCESSING TECHNIQUES

All of our products start the same way, with fresh milk pickups from the farms. The temperate climate of the Northwest provides a year-round supply of high quality milk.



PRIORITY: EXPORTS

Expanding exports is a key component of growing dairy sales and creating long-term demand for Washington dairy products. In 2025, export efforts focused on advancing sustainable growth for value-added U.S. dairy in priority international markets.

Through collaboration with the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) and targeted market development initiatives, we strengthened commercial relationships, supported global buyer engagement, and reinforced Washington dairy's competitive position worldwide—laying the groundwork for expanded market access and future growth.

INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

USDEC x Darigold   

During the USDEC market visit, we **toured the Darigold Pasco plant and Five D Farms to showcase the strength, quality, and integration of Washington's dairy supply chain from farm to processing.**

The Darigold export team outlined its 2025–2026 strategic priorities for global growth, while USDEC shared current initiatives and 2026 objectives focused on expanding U.S. dairy exports.

We also met with WSDA to ensure alignment with USDEC efforts, reinforcing a **coordinated state and national approach** to strengthening Washington dairy's global competitiveness.



PARTNERSHIPS

LATAM Market Program

The Latin America Market Program supported participation in additional **trade shows across key Central and South American markets**, increasing visibility and strengthening relationships with importers and distributors in high-growth regions.

These targeted, in-market efforts **generated new business opportunities and resulted in signed contracts**, including a significant **agreement for 1 million pounds of skim milk powder (SMP)**, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in driving measurable export growth and expanding U.S. dairy's footprint in LATAM markets.

2025 National Checkoff Impact Report

3%

McDonald's growth in Q3 driven by Snack Wraps and McDonaldland Shakes



5,000



farmers engaged through farm tours, trade shows, meetings and events representing nearly 4M cows

1,000+

farms reached through sustainability programs like FARM ES powered by RuFaS, Dairy Scale for Good, Feed in Focus & Regenerative Ag Pilot



20



Percentage points increase of dairy's share of voice within the First 1,000 traditional media landscape compared to same time last year

80+

active product research studies managed

40+

active nutrition research studies managed

100K

views on Dairycheckoff.com of the checkoff impact

MAKING EVERY DROP COUNT

your DAIRY CHECKOFF
Dairy Management Inc.

\$3M

in new external investments for industry sustainability initiatives



229K

health professionals reached

650+

school nutrition professionals reached

100



new product concepts developed for foodservice beverage and cheese, retail women's health and butter to take to industry in 2026

24

senior leaders who participated in ASPIRE to LEAD

33

leaders who participated in Grow Talent, Grow Results workshops

12+

new products launched thru IPC partnerships

~180M

incremental value-added dairy ingredients volume delivered thru IPC

2.7%



incremental sales lift at an all-outlet level through We Are Family

**mid-campaign results*

Washington Dairy Commission Board Members



WASHINGTON DAIRY COMMISSION BOARD



Jason Vander Kooy, Chair
District 1
jvanderkooy@wadairy.org

Raleb Whitby, Vice Chair
Washington State At-Large
kwhitby@wadairy.org

Jim Werkhoven
Western Washington At-Large
jim@wadairy.org

Dick Bengen
Eastern Washington At-Large
dick@wadairy.org

Lana Smaciarz
District 2
lana@wadairy.org

Dan DeRuyter
District 3
dderuyter@wadairy.org

Sharon DeRuyter
District 4
sharon@wadairy.org

Nora Doelman
Advisory Position
ndoelman@wadairy.org

Lynne Wheeler
Advisory Position
lynne@wadairy.org

Marissa Watson
Dealer Representative
mwatson@wadairy.org

Liz Whitefield
WSDA Representative
lwhitefield@wadairy.org

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR
CHECKOFF PROGRAM? _____



Steve Seppi
CEO
sseppi@dairywest.com

Kaysha Keel
Farmer Relations Manager, Washington
kkeel@dairywest.com