



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WFU survey webinars seek dairy stakeholder feedback

CHIPPEWA FALLS – Wisconsin Farmers Union invites farmers and other dairy stakeholders to take part in upcoming webinars on the recently concluded Wisconsin Dairy Producer Survey, which went out this fall to every dairy farmer in the state.

A webinar today at 11:30am and another on Wednesday, January 11 at 8pm will offer a chance to review the survey results and share ideas on what is needed to best help Wisconsin's dairy farmers. Participants can log in from a computer, tablet or smartphone. The call-in number is 1-646-749-3112, passcode 484-672-733. Visit <https://www.gotomeet.me/WisconsinFarmersUnion> to access the webinar.

Wisconsin Farmers Union chose to conduct a survey after repeatedly hearing concerns from farmers within the grassroots organization about how their farms were being squeezed as dairy programs were failing to help them endure the volatile price cycles. In the spring of 2016, farmers at the National Farmers Union Convention in Minneapolis established a special dairy emergency committee to better include the voices of farmers from all regions. This summer, WFU formed a statewide Dairy Committee to foster farmer-to-farmer discussions and build connections between farmers within various co-ops and organizations. This survey is one of the first projects that committee has undertaken.

“Our goal is not to push for any one particular dairy program, but to start by helping dairy farmers talk, in their own words, about what is most important,” said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. “We do think a good dairy program requires both government action and farmer and processor collaboration.”

Von Ruden noted in a recent follow-up letter to dairy survey respondents that WFU believes a good dairy program should be rooted in some basic values:

- Fair and stable prices, and open and honest access to markets
- Responsible and equitable management of over-production
- Fiscally responsible programs to provide meaningful price relief when needed
- A belief in the value of cooperation
- Pride in the quality of our products and stewardship of our farms

“Over the next year, Wisconsin Farmers Union hopes to join with other farmers and organizations to help shape a dairy policy that is based on these values,” Von Ruden said. “Put simply, we want to be part of the solution, and we don't think that solution is to squeeze thousands of additional dairy farms out of business.”

The full Wisconsin Dairy Producer Survey results are available at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Wisconsin Farmers Union is a member-driven organization committed to enhancing the quality of life for family farmers, rural communities, and all people through educational opportunities, cooperative endeavors, and civic engagement. Learn more at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

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