

KENTUCKY

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Cold Weather Management Preparation

Jared Patterson

Toboggan and overall weather are up on us. That means winter is here. Although colder weather does mean playing in the snow, or the beginning of a new year upon, it can have a negative impact on our dairy cattle if we allow it. The main impact is cold stress, which is the physiological state where an animal is forced to expend extra energy to maintain its core body temperature because the environmental temperature is below its thermoneutral zone. It is important that we as producers understand this struggle and how we can prevent this problem, so that our livestock can live and grow in a stress-free environment, while also maintaining or improving milk production/quality. We can combat the effects of cold stress on the herd by focusing on shelter, environment, nutrition, water, and herd health management.

We will first discuss shelter and environment. Shelters enable us to protect the herd from the environment. As we know from this year's summer, the environment was hot and moist, which meant shelters needed to be highly ventilated and dry. For the colder weather that will come our way, we need shelters to have adequate draft control from the wind, while also providing ventilation and keeping the cattle dry. This would include things such as shutting doors, windows, and curtains to prevent cold winds from blowing on our cattle. Cattle that are under cold stress produce less milk, because energy is used to stay warm. Controlled ventilation is important as well, since harmful gases like ammonia, which at levels as low as 4 ppm have been shown in studies to cause respiratory issues, can build up quickly. The goal is fresh air without drafts. Dry bedding provides insulation for cattle, which helps maintain their body temperature. Producers should provide enough, deep, and clean dry bedding to meet this goal. Remember that a dirty wet coat loses its insulating capability. For our pasture-based producers, providing tree lines, hills, man-made three-sided sheds, and/or stacks of round bales for windbreaks can help. When managing calves, provide well bedded pens/hutches



continued on page 4



President's Corner

Freeman Brundige

Just a couple of months ago we were wishing for some cool weather. Well this week we got our wish. Temps in the single digits and wind chills below 0 degrees have stretched across Kentucky. Again the cows and their caretakers have to adjust to the changing environment. Sometimes when we get this cold weather early the rest of winter is a little easier. All things average out over time.

Hopefully, history will record the last few days as banner days for the dairy industry. The whole milk for healthy kids act has passed overwhelmingly in the Senate and the House. This could give us a chance to create future milk drinkers, after losing one and a half generations of milk lovers, due to tasteless and inferior milk to drink in our school systems.

But that is only part of the battle, school boards across the country will have to add the higher fat and nutritious product in their school menus, and that may cause changes in their budget, not an easy thing to change.

Lots of conferences and meetings for dairy producers are taking place thru these winter months. Hope you can attend some or all of them

Comments always welcome.

Time For an Adventure

Help us plan the fall tour by taking this survey.
We want to know what you want to see and do.

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KDDC

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Kentucky Milk Matters produced by Carey Brown

EKU Agriculture Department and UK Animal and Food Sciences Department Partner to Host “Dare to Dairy”

Barbara Jones



Dare to Dairy is a popular annual youth event to teach youth about the science behind dairy farming and the dairy industry. The event started in 2010 at the University of Kentucky and has since moved to a partnership between EKU and UK and is held at EKU's Meadowbrook farm. A background in Agriculture is not necessary to attend the event, just an interest to learn and get your hands dirty.

During the event, youth rotate to different stations to learn about the science behind ruminant digestion, lactation, on-farm technology, hoof health, calf care and more. Because of the science 4-Hers can earn educational hours by actively participating in the event. Each year youth earn varying educational hours depending on the structure of the event. This year, youth earned 3 educational hours by learning about milk secretion from Dr. Bob Harmon, on-farm technology from Dr. Jeffrey Bewley, butter making from Elise Carpenter and Michelle Sidwell, embryo development and invitro fertilization from Dr. Nelson, and ruminant digestion from Dr. Amaral-Phillips. The theme of some of the stations rotates year to year with a variety of topics offered, many of the stations are hands-on such as reaching into a cannulated animal to feel the rumen papillae.



This year, the event had 80 youth attending. Thank you to Larissa Tucker for organizing the youth side, our stations leaders, and to EKU Meadowbrook for hosting the event. We look forward to this annual event and hope to see new and returning faces at next year's event!

- *Dr. Harmon discussing milk secretion*
- *Dr. Bewley discussing on-farm technology*
- *Dr. Amaral-Phillips discussing ruminant digestion*





Executive Director Comments

Tori Embry

Another year has come and went and many of us are talking about what 2026 will hold. Whether you're getting your news from the TV, industry publications, fellow farmers, or- my personal favorite- podcasts, everyone is trying to project what we can expect from the upcoming year and prepare accordingly. This time last year, we were hopeful for solid milk prices like what we saw in 2024 and were planning for growth of the industry with increased processing capacity. That outlook changed quickly with expansion of the national dairy herd, questions about trade, and conversations about labor. Where does this leave us in 2026?

Experts are expecting 2026 milk prices to have quite a bit of pressure on them with an increase in not just national milk production, but increased production across the world. Overall margins are also projected to be tight, because while feed costs may remain low, fertilizer and other input costs are expected to increase. However, because of the low feed costs, it may be unlikely to see any DMC payments. Altogether, 2026 is looking to be a tough year for dairy.

While not the outlook we hope to see, there are some ways to offset this pressure. Beef-on-dairy has been the saving grace for a large part of the industry over the last few years and we have seen some reports that it has added as much as \$4-\$5 to the bottom line for some operations. KDDC has supported Kentucky producers with exploring beef-on-dairy strategies for the last few years and we continue to see a demand for these calves. If you are considering adding some beef to your breeding in 2026, my top tip is to remember it is a strategy. Carefully strategize with trusted advisors before getting started to get the most out of this value-added option.

Other value-added options are also available to dairy producers, from on-farm processing and agri-tourism, to adding diversified crops to the operation. KDDC has worked with many value-added operations in Kentucky and surrounding states and have found that these operations come in all different shapes and sizes that allow for more diversity within the industry and allow operations to find success in different ways.

While listening and reading and talking about these 2026 projections, I continue to hear phrases like "unprecedented times in the industry." This may be true: beef markets that add so much value to dairy operations, high milk production across the world, sky-rocketing processing capacity. Whichever direction your operation goes in 2026, KDDC will be here to offer support. Our Dairy Impact Program is designed to meet operations where they're at, exploring their goals for the future and helping them get there with expansive cost share options. Through our partnership with the Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative, we are excited to offer cost share for genomic testing through 2026. And of course, you can expect to find us at our regular annual events, from the Kentucky Dairy Conference, to the June Dairy Nights at the Ballgame and Fall Tour. We look forward to working with you and your operation in 2026 and don't hesitate to reach out any time and let us know how we can help.

continued from cover

for calves under 3 weeks of age will help them conserve energy, which can increase their health and weight gain.

Nutrition and water are crucially important. As we know, the goal for cattle to have enough energy to maintain their core body temperature as it gets colder can be better maintained with proper nutrition and water access. Cattle may require a range of 15%-30% more feed to compensate for the increase in metabolic energy needed for warmth, especially when temperatures fall beneath 18 degrees Fahrenheit. Adjusting diets to be rich in carbohydrates and fats will boost energy density and maintain health and production. Also provide plenty of high-quality forages, as digestion generates heat, which helps keep cattle warm. Cattle prefer water temperatures between 40-60 degrees Fahrenheit, water colder than

this can decrease intake and also requires energy for the cow to warm it up in their rumen. Investing in heaters in water will keep the water from being unreasonably cold or freezing. It is important to ensure that our water sources are clean, unfrozen, and always functioning, so check these sources daily to ensure this. For calves, offer warm water after every feeding to encourage hydration.

For herd health management, maintaining appropriate body condition score >2 will allow for insulation during cold events. Remember thin cattle are more susceptible to cold stress. Frostbite prevention is vitally important as wet teats are vulnerable to frostbite. Ensure that all teats on each cow are dry before they leave the parlor. Applying a post-dip specifically designed for cold weather or even a dry powder dip during extreme cold spells can help maintain teat condition. Traction control prevents the

collection of ice on walking surfaces near the parlors, feed bunks, and water sources. This can be done by using sand, gravel, or well-grooved concrete to improve traction and prevent injuries. It's also important to inspect our facilities regularly. Make sure to repair barn roofs, walls, and curtains before cold weather arrives. Check all heating elements like plumbing for water lines and electrical wiring to prevent freezing and ensure safety.

In conclusion, effective cold weather management and preparation is vitally important for the health and productivity of our dairy cattle. By ensuring proper shelter, environment, nutrition, water, and herd health management, we can allow our operations to thrive during these colder weather months. So, remember to bundle up, stay warm, and as always, keep our dairies first when Jack Frost comes to town!

DAIRY IMPACT PROGRAM 2026

*Supporting Dairy Farms.
Growing the Industry.*

*Programming for the development of
Kentucky Dairy Operations*

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- Review application requirements online and begin to prepare now!

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2024 Dairy Gauge Results for Kentucky Farms

Jonathan D Shepherd Agricultural Extension Specialist, University of Kentucky

David Bilderback Extension Specialist, University of Tennessee

Kenny Burdine Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

Accurate financial records are essential for managing risk and improving profitability in agriculture. For dairy producers, this information is critical given the complexity of modern operations and ongoing market volatility. To support better financial decision making, the University of Tennessee and University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension developed the Dairy Gauge Benchmarking program. This program provides a structured way for producers to evaluate financial performance under standardized financial statements and production measures. By comparing themselves to peer farms, producers can gain insights into management strengths and identify areas needing improvement.

In the 2024 production year, a total of 28 dairy farms from Tennessee and Kentucky participated in the Dairy Gauge program (17 farms from Kentucky). Their results provide a meaningful snapshot of dairy business performance across the region and highlight both strengths and challenges.

Milk Production Summary

Kentucky dairy farms in the program reported a combined annual milk production of 98.7 million pounds from 3,945 cows, averaging 22,829 pounds per cow. While slightly below the broader average of 23,717 pounds, Kentucky herds performed competitively and reflect strong, stable production levels aligned with regional herd management and production environments.

Production Summary Table

Category	Kentucky Totals	All Farms
Number of Farms	17	28
Annual Milk Production (lbs)	98,748,199	356,771,673
Number of Cows	3,945	13,467
Average Pounds Per Cow	22,829	23,717

Income and Expense Highlights Summary

The Kentucky dairy farms in the analysis showed strong performance, with higher income from calves, heifers, and cull cows compared to the overall farm average, while maintaining lower feed and labor costs. Their total cash expenses remain below regional averages, highlighting efficient management and cost control.

Income Per Hundredweight (CWT)

Category	Kentucky/CWT	All Farms/CWT
Calves & Heifers	\$1.30	\$1.16
Cull Cows	\$2.68	\$2.34
Milk	\$24.58	\$24.85
Gross Farm Income**	\$30.49	\$30.78

**Gross farm income contains miscellaneous income related to the dairy operation

Expense Per Hundredweight (CWT)

Category	Kentucky/CWT	All Farms/CWT
Feed	\$8.14	\$9.06
Labor	\$2.53	\$2.94
Total Cash Farm Expense	\$24.35	\$24.95

Balance Sheet & Profitability Benchmarks

The Kentucky dairy farms demonstrated strong solvency and liquidity, maintaining lower debt levels and healthy current ratios compared to the full benchmark group. Profitability ratios such as ROA and ROE were somewhat lower, but these differences primarily reflect herd size and capital structure rather than management weakness. Overall, the Kentucky farms exhibit financial stability and competitive performance, with opportunities to enhance returns through strategic efficiency and revenue-focused improvements.

Balance Sheet Indicators

Benchmark	Kentucky	All Farms
Debt Per Cow	\$4,701.24	\$4,839.83
Non-Land Debt Per Cow	\$1,481.38	\$1,495.10
Asset Turnover Ratio	35%	37%
Current Ratio	4.18	4.22
Debt to Asset Ratio	20%	22%
Debt to Equity Ratio	32%	36%

Profitability Measures

Benchmark	Kentucky	All Farms
Rate of Return on Assets (ROA)	4.0%	7.1%
Non-Land ROA	5%	11%
Rate of Return on Equity (ROE)	5.0%	8.8%
Non-Land ROE	6.5%	13.1%

Income & Expense Benchmarks

Income per cow for the Kentucky farms trailed the overall benchmark group, driven largely by slightly lower milk production per cow. However, the Kentucky farms maintained competitive operating cost levels, keeping expenses in line with peers. Labor expenses as a share of gross income were slightly lower, reflecting effective labor management and cost control.

Benchmark	Kentucky	All Farms
Income Per Cow	\$6,844.82	\$7,223.81
Operating Cost (% of Gross Income)	77%	78%
Labor Expense (% of Gross Income)	9%	10%

Milk Prices

Feed Benchmarks

Feed costs are the most significant expenses for dairy operations, and Kentucky farms performed competitively in this area. Purchased feed costs were lower than the overall average, though forage costs were slightly higher. Total feed cost per CWT and milk income over feed cost were nearly identical for all farms, indicating strong feed efficiency and effective ration management.

Benchmark	Kentucky	All Farms
Purchased Feed / CWT	\$8.14	\$9.06
Home Grown Feed Cost / CWT	\$5.33	\$4.68
Total Feed Cost per CWT	\$13.93	\$14.00
Purchased Feed Costs (% of Total)	27%	30%
Total Feed Cost (% of Milk Income)	56%	56%
Milk Income Over Feed Cost (\$/CWT)	\$10.85	\$10.97
Milk Income Over Feed Cost (%)	44%	44%

Conclusion

The 2024 benchmark results offer valuable context as the dairy industry navigates the financial challenges of 2025. The year 2024 was a very good one for dairy producers, but milk prices declined sharply in 2025 and are likely to remain under pressure into 2026. Profitability will increasingly hinge on a farm's ability to generate value beyond the milk check. Two of the most significant opportunities to bolster revenue in these tight-margin conditions are marketing bull calves, particularly through beef-on-dairy programs, and optimizing cull cow marketing strategies.

Beef-on-dairy crossbreeding has become an increasingly valuable tool. Beef sired calves command significantly higher market prices than traditional dairy bull calves, offering producers a more reliable supplemental income stream that can help offset declining milk revenue. Similarly, cull cow sales remain high, so removing low-producing or high-cost animals can contribute meaningful revenue while improving herd efficiency.

As low milk prices continue to shape the financial landscape, Kentucky dairy farms that actively manage these additional revenue channels will be better positioned to maintain profitability and cash flow. By combining good cost control with proactive calf and cull cow marketing strategies, producers can strengthen their financial resilience heading into 2026.

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Thank you for your interest in attending our event! Please fill out the form below.

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Bowling Green, KY
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Producer Information

Farm Name

Contact Person

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

Email

County

of Cows

Registration Type *(Please select one)*

Producer
\$40

Industry/Government
\$100

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\$30

Virtual Only
\$20

Registration includes (1) two-day registration - all meals/events included

Additional Registrants (each additional registration is the same cost as above unless it is within a producer family, all meals included)

Name

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Registration Total:

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In-person

Signature

Date

KENTUCKY DAIRY CONFERENCE 2026 AGENDA

SLOAN CONVENTION CENTER
BOWLING GREEN, KY

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH

- 7:00 – 9:00 AM Tradeshow Set Up
- 8:00 – 9:00 AM Registration
- 9:00 AM Welcome and Update from KDDC
- 9:30 AM **Managing Risk on Your Dairy Operation**
 - Bryce Windecker & Owen TeVelde
 - EVERAG
- 10:15 AM **Breakout Sessions (Choose one option per time slot)**
- 10:15 – 10:45 AM Breakout Session 1
- 10:45 – 11:15 AM Breakout Session 2
- Option 1 – Breakout**
- Funding and Programs for Kentucky Dairy Producers**
 - Cara Stewart
 - Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development
- Option 2 – Breakout**
- Selecting Silage Corn Hybrids and Forage Talk**
 - Craig Cohorn & Dennis Brown
 - Byron Seeds
- 11:15 AM Break for Trade Show
- 11:45 AM Lunch
- 12:45 – 1:45 PM **Managing Milk Quality on the Farm**
 - Producer Panel
- 1:45 – 4:00 PM **Milking System Analysis and CIP Training - Using the Teaching Parlor: A Milking System Simulator**
 - Roger Thomson D.V.M.
 - MQ-IQ Consulting, Inc and Michigan State University
- 4:00 PM Exhibitor Break
- Youth Breakout Sessions
 - TBA
- Industry Update Poster Session
- 5:30 – 7:30 PM **Kentucky Dairy Awards Banquet Dinner**
 - Keynote Speaker - TBA

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH

- 8:00 AM Registration and Trade Show Open
- 8:30 AM Welcome from the Dairy Alliance
- 8:45 AM **Bringing the Dairy Farm to School: Connecting Producers with Local School Nutrition Programs**
 - Heather Vankleeck
 - Kentucky Department of Education
 - Tina Garland
 - KDA – Food Division
- 9:30 AM **Understanding Mastitis Relationships**
 - Dr. Derek Nolan
 - University of Illinois
- 10:45 AM **Animal Health Update and Biosecurity Interactive Workshop**
 - Beth Johnson D.V.M.
 - KDA – Office of State Vet
 - Christopher Craig D.V.M.
 - USDA – APHIS
- 11:45 AM Wrap up and Evaluations
- 12:00 PM ADA and KDDC Board Meetings

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THE DAIRY ALLIANCE



Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



10 Things to Know Before Building a Compost Bedded Pack Barn

Jeffrey Bewley, PhD, PAS Dairy Housing and Analytics Specialist

Interest in compost bedded pack barns continues to increase globally because of the potential benefits of added cow comfort and a positive environmental impact. When managed properly, the compost bedded pack barn is an excellent option for dairy cattle housing (top). However, when it is mismanaged, it is a potential train wreck (bottom).

Compost bedded pack barns are not for everyone. The risk for mismanagement is higher for a compost bedded pack barn than for a free-stall barn. When a compost barn is not working the way it's supposed to, somatic cell count, clinical mastitis and feet problems will flourish.

We have observed that every time the compost bedded pack barn becomes popular in a new region, the dairy producers in the area think they can do it differently than dairy producers in other parts of the world because "it's different here." While it is true that the environment, the economy and other factors may allow for different management strategies, the basic principles of managing a compost bedded pack barn hold true across the globe. Cow and compost biology are the same everywhere. Just like with all management practices, we can learn from the successes and failures of others.

The difference between a compost bedded pack barn and a conventional bedded pack barn is that we are actively managing



a composting process by adding oxygen to the bedding material by stirring it 2–3 times daily. Composting creates heat that dries the bedding material, which provides the cows a clean, dry place to lie down. This keeps cows clean, maximizing their udder and foot health. A side benefit of composting is that it reduces bedding costs; the better a pack is composting, the less bedding (which adds carbon) is needed. The goal is to maintain a

moisture level of 45–55% and an internal pack temperature above 130° F. How do we build a barn to achieve this goal? What follows is a summary of concepts to consider in building a compost bedded pack barn.

1. Spacing

Space per cow is essential. Cows constantly add manure and urine to the compost bedded pack, and higher

yielding, larger cows add more manure and urine. Greater cow density also increases pack compaction and reduces oxygen exposure, which the aerobic compost bacteria need. More space per cow reduces the use and costs of bedding. We now recommend a minimum of 125 square feet of pack space per cow, with 150 square feet of pack space per cow being ideal for lactating Holstein cows. The compost barn is unforgiving of overstocking.

2. Barn orientation

Compost bedded pack barns should be oriented east-west. Barn orientation has a significant impact on the natural light patterns within a dairy barn. An east-west orientation has the least sunlight penetration into a barn and is highly recommended for compost bedded pack barns. With an east-west orientation, the sun moves over the top of the barn through the day. With a north-south orientation, the sun moves over the broader sides of the barn, which creates more light intensity in areas where the cows rest or eat. During heat-stress conditions, cows will move away from areas with more light and move toward darker parts of the barn. Bunching behavior in compost bedded pack barns is much more common and more pronounced in north-south-oriented barns than in east-west-oriented barns. In extreme situations, cows may only



use 10–20% of the provided space. This behavior occurs almost exclusively during heat-stress conditions. As such, we strongly recommend an east-west orientation when constructing a new compost bedded pack barn. The first picture below shows even cow distribution in an east-west-oriented barn, while the picture beneath it shows bunching behavior in a north-south-oriented barn

3. Cooling and ventilation

An open ridge vent (shown at the top of the next column) is critical for maximizing natural ventilation. Our preference is to provide an open ridge with a cap. A continuous ridge vent opening of at least 3 inches for every

10 feet of the building roof width is recommended, with a minimum opening of 12 inches for barn widths of less than 40 feet. If a cap is placed above the ridge, the distance between the roof and the cap should be 3/4 of the ridge opening. Often, this cap is placed so close to the roof that it defeats the purpose of the ridge opening by choking air through the cap. An overshoot roof can provide reasonable air removal when the opening is high enough. However, good air removal only occurs when wind moves across the higher side. When wind moves toward the opening, it actually forces air back into the barn.

Properly positioned fans help cool cows and dry bedding material. Inadequate or improperly placed fans are one of the biggest issues observed in compost bedded pack barns. Fan selection and spacing should be decided upon when designing the new barn, not after it's built. Regardless of the type of fans chosen, spacing is critical to avoid dead spaces. HVLS fans should be spaced 2–2.5 times the diameter of the fan. In other words, a 20-foot HVLS fan will cover 40–50 feet horizontally and vertically. Panel fans need to be spaced longitudinally down the barn at no more than 10 times their blade diameter width. For example, 48-inch fans should not be placed more than 40 feet apart. Side-to-side spacing of fans should be 6–10 feet between fans.

Sidewalls should be constructed to allow for at least 12 feet of open space for airflow above the retaining wall or outside curb for barns that are less than 40 feet wide, while a 14-foot height is recommended for barns wider than 40 feet. Eave overhangs should be equal to 1/3 the height of the sidewall to keep rain from reaching the pack, and install roof gutters to reduce the likelihood of roof runoff blowing into the pack.



4. Bunk space

Feed and water space are often overlooked during the construction of a compost bedded pack barn. Provide a minimum of 24–30 inches of feed bunk space per cow, 4 inches of water access per cow and at least two separate water locations per pen. Do not reduce feed and water access in an effort to build a low-cost facility. Because cows defecate and urinate more around feed and water (as seen on the top left), they should have access on the alley side. Alley-only access minimizes excess moisture in the pack and keeps water cleaner. It also eliminates the need to alter the waterer height as the pack depth changes. Some type of physical separation between the pack and the water, like what is shown in the picture on the top right, is necessary.



Cows will generally use the resting space provided more efficiently when they have multiple entry access points along the long side of the rectangular resting area. Concrete feed alleys should be 16 feet wide, with access to the bedded pack located every 50 feet and at each end. This is wider than what is typically recommended for freestall barns because cows need to access water and feed simultaneously.



5. Retaining walls

The perimeter of a bedded pack is often surrounded by bedding retaining walls, which keep bedding material in the barn and provide more manure storage. These walls may consist of cast-in-place concrete, moveable concrete panels, highway guardrails or wooden panels. Early compost bedded pack barns used 4-foot retaining walls for manure storage and to keep bedding within the structure. Practical experience and computer modeling have demonstrated, however, that 4-foot retaining walls block air flow to cows lying down. Current recommendations are to use a 2–2.5-foot retaining wall instead to improve cow-level air flow. An 8–12” curb separating the bedded pack from the feed alley is recommended to provide physical separation between the feed alley and the pack area, which is helpful in managing pack moisture. A fence above the curb rather than a wall is also recommended.

6. Management

Packs should be stirred or tilled at least twice daily, 365 days a year. This process provides oxygen to the compost bacteria and removes fresh cow manure from the pack surface. Many different types of

tillage equipment can work effectively; however, the best results are observed with specialized roto-tillers that reach at least 12–18” deep, like the one pictured above from LVI Manufacturing. This type of equipment can provide deep tillage but may also easily break apart clumps of material where there is no internal moisture.

7. Storage

Bedding availability and price often vary seasonally. Establishing a dedicated location for storing bedding during low availability or high pricing can be extremely beneficial.

8. Bedding material

Dry, fine wood shavings or sawdust are the gold standards for compost bedded pack barn bedding. Kiln-dried sawdust is a fine, coarse material that provides a suitable ratio of surface area to volume, is easy to till, and absorbs and holds liquids well. If green sawdust is used, the amount necessary will be higher than when using the kiln-dried variety, as its higher water

content reduces the amount of water that can be absorbed. Cedar should be avoided because it contains oils and organic materials that inhibit the microbial activity necessary for composting. The size of bedding particles is particularly important for regulating microbial access to the food source: manure and urine. Moderate particle size, neither too fine nor too coarse, is preferred. Alternate bedding materials with large particles do not work well and should be finely chopped. Finely processed corncobs, soy straw or flax straw, ground through a 3/4-inch screen, have performed well. Peanut hulls, almond shells, kenaf, coffee husks and rice straw are also viable alternatives to sawdust. Such fine materials may be used in a mix with sawdust to stretch the sawdust supply.

Long lengths of corn stalks, waste hay, and oat, barley and wheat straw tend to retain too much water because they are slow to dry. Moreover, if the waxy outer surface coating remains on wheat straw, water is slower to be absorbed or dried.



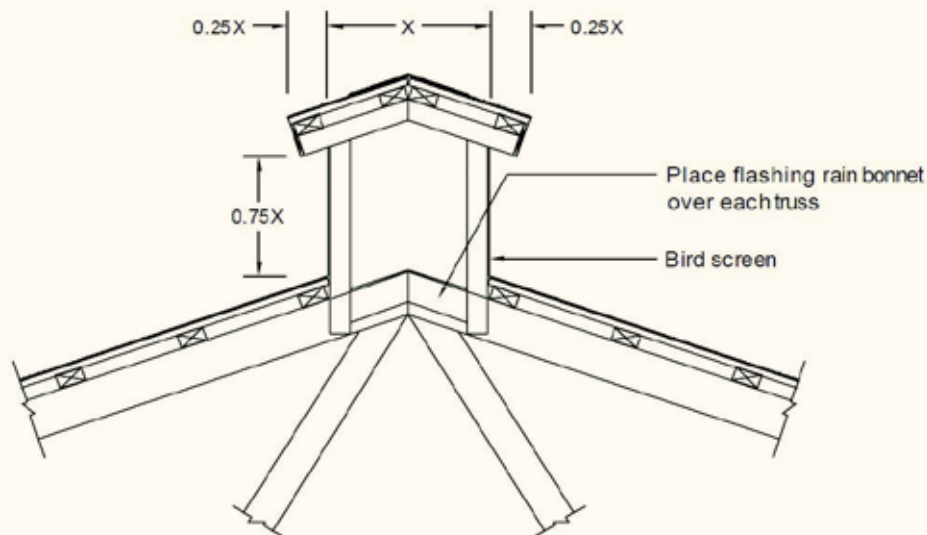
9. Bedding depth

When starting a new compost barn, the goal should be to start with 18" of bedding material. The compost process will work better and start sooner if more bedding is used up-front. Packs are typically cleaned out annually in the spring or fall. They should not be cleaned out in the winter. The top layer of bedding may be used as a starter for the next pack; however, caution should be taken when re-using the bottom layer, as that layer is no longer actively composting and may contain opportunistic mastitis-causing bacteria.

10. Mastitis prevention

Surface bedding bacteria levels are high in compost bedded pack barns. Contrary to popular belief, composting heat doesn't reach a high enough temperature to kill mastitis-causing bacteria. For this reason, mastitis prevention strategies are extra important in compost bedded pack barns. Extra attention should be paid to cleaning teat ends during the milking process. E. coli and Klebsiella vaccines have been beneficial in many cases. Peroxide pre-dips do not appear to work well in compost bedded pack herds.

Compost Bedded Pack Key Feature Recommendations



FEATURE	RECOMMENDATION
Pack Space per Cow (Holstein)	Ideal: 125 to 150 sq. ft. Minimum: 100 sq. ft.
Feed Alley Width	16 feet
Roof Pitch	4/12
Ridge Opening Width	3 inches for every 10 feet of building width
Ridge Cap Height	3/4 of ridge opening width
Perimeter Retaining Wall	2 to 2.5 feet
Curb Separating Feed Alley from Pack	12 to 18 inches
Opening Between Top or Retaining Wall and Eave	14 feet
Eave Overhangs	1/3 of the eave height
Entrances	Placed at least every 50 feet
Fan Spacing (HVLS fans)	2X fan blade diameter
Fan Spacing (Panel fans) Side to Side	8X fan blade diameter
Fan Spacing (Panel fans) Within a Row	10X fan blade diameter
Bunk Space per Cow	2 feet
Water Space	3 feet of tank perimeter per 15 cows
Goal Moisture Level	45 to 55%
Pack Temperature @ 8-12 inches below Surface	130 to 150 degrees Fahrenheit
Stirring Frequency	2X daily, 365 days a year
Stirring Depth	18 inches



Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative

The Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative (SDBII) program is based at The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture’s Animal Science Department. Key program collaborators such as the Center for Profitable Agriculture, North Carolina State University, University of Kentucky, Kentucky Dairy Development Council, and others, offer guidance and support to the program. SDBII’s mission is to spur growth for dairy producers and processors in the Southeast by helping them modernize and diversify through the production of value-added dairy products.



The program is funded by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In addition to the technical assistance and educational resources provided through SDBII, 50% of the program’s funding is awarded in grants made directly to dairy businesses to assist them in developing new and more profitable products and processes.

13 States/territories eligible for SDBII grant awards

5 Competitive grant programs offered

\$20M Awarded to dairy businesses

214 Unique projects funded
 ➤ 164 distinctive entities
 ➤ Benefitting 257 agriculture goods and services providers



Success stories available at sdbii.tennessee.edu



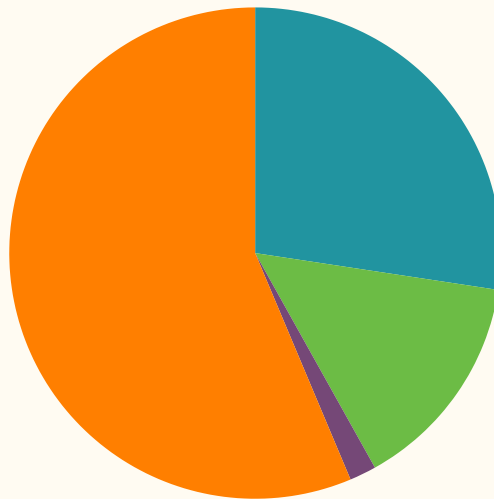


Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative

Aside from **competitive grant opportunities to Southeast dairy businesses**, SDBII utilizes 50% of funding received from USDA-AMS to provide dairy businesses with free or low-cost resources. Funded resources include technical assistance, workforce development, and applied research.

Technical Assistance

- Grant aid to applicants and awarded dairy businesses
- Supporting Dairy Gauge, a farm-specific decision support tool to provide economic benchmarks
- Precision dairy quality lab, with resources such as somatic cell counting and milk and dairy product component analysis
- Exploring alternative revenue streams such as agritourism or on-farm processing



Workforce Development

- Education and leadership building opportunities for dairy producers, processors, and employees
- Internships including the Undergraduate Development and Internship Research Experience (U-DAIRE) program in collaboration with the University of Kentucky, NC State University and North Carolina A&T State University

Applied Research

- Consumer and market insights including willingness to pay for farmstead products and effects of production and retail methods on such, and demand and marketing outlets for farmstead dairy products
- Farm benchmarking and economic viability evaluation on the efficacy of government subsidy programs, rural land loss, on-farm processing costs, investments in precision technology, and small ruminant milk quality and on-farm processing
- Novel products and processes including new feed ingredients, food colorants, and methods to prevent freezer damage on cultured dairy products
- Producer and technology perceptions through producer perceptions of precision dairy technology and applied use precision technology and its data on dairy farms



KENTUCKY CORN SILAGE HYBRID PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2025

Richard C. Kenimer, Philip Shine, and Dalton Mertz Plant and Soil Sciences

HYBRID	TONS/A AT 35% DM			LOCATION		FORAGE QUALITY				MILK YIELD		BEEF YIELD	
	2025	2024-25	2023-25	CALDWELL	FAYETTE	CP	ADF	aNDF	TDN	lb/T	lb/A	lb/T	lb/A
Revere 114-P35	26.8			27.7	25.9	7.1	20.2	32.9	73.7	3007	94753	259	2358
Integra 6386	26.2			28.6	23.7	7.1	19.3	31.7	74.4	3163	94048	282	2593
CANE RUN CRE-2020	25.6			26.6	24.7	7.2	21.0	34.7	73.2	3060	87198	270	2384
NUTECH 74A5	25.6			26.4	24.8	6.9	22.0	36.2	72.4	3016	93010	260	2211
Revere 113-T42	25.6			25.5	25.7	7.1	19.6	32.2	74.1	3086	94703	272	2528
Crows 5859	25.2			24.5	25.9	7.0	21.0	34.2	73.2	3031	83675	258	1884
Crows 5444	25.1			26.5	23.7	7.2	20.0	32.3	73.9	3029	89997	257	2311
DEKALB DKC115-81RIB	24.8			27.6	21.9	7.2	20.3	33.4	73.6	3090	88933	272	2310
INTEGRA 6493 VT2P	24.6	22.4		28.1	21.1	7.1	19.1	31.1	74.5	3146	92149	281	2249
Partners Brand PB 8961	23.6	22.4	21	26.8	20.4	7.7	28.9	46.6	67.6	2725	68123	185	1502
DEKALB DKC70-94	23.5	20.5	20	23.5	23.4	7.6	22.8	37.2	71.9	2902	76137	231	1764
Integra 6915	23			22.7	23.4	6.9	21.5	35.8	72.8	2986	88941	256	2256
DEKALB DKC111-02RIB	21.9			26.5	17.3	7.5	20.0	33.2	73.8	3121	89353	280	2304
Silage Check	21.8			22	21.6	7.7	19.8	34.4	74.0	3248	96630	309	2164
CANE RUN CRE-8520	21.2			28.4	14.1	8.7	26.1	44.3	69.5	2712	79436	204	1369
DEKALB DKC113-26RIB	20.3	18.2		21.8	18.7	7.0	21.1	36.2	73.1	3171	84945	295	2578
CANE RUN CRE-55D	13.9			21.9	5.9	8.9	28.0	45.8	68.3	2602	65888	169	619
CANE RUN CRE-15	11.4			11.4	11.4	9.8	24.5	40.2	70.7	2765	71858	289	671
Average	22.8	20.9	20.5	24.8	20.8	7.5	22.0	36.2	72.5	2992	85543	252	2003
C.V.	26.8	14.7	14.9	19.9	23.6								
LSD (0.10)	6.1	3.3	2.5	6.8	6.8								

Table 1: State Summary

Procedures for the 2025 Kentucky Silage Corn Hybrid Performance Trials

Objective

The objective of the Silage Corn Hybrid Performance Test is to provide unbiased forage yield and quality data for corn hybrids commonly grown for silage in Kentucky.

General Procedures

Corn hybrids were evaluated for silage performance on cooperating farms. Representatives from seed companies submitted hybrids of their choosing.

University of Kentucky personnel planted the hybrid seeds. Farmers applied the soil amendments and pest management. University of Kentucky personnel harvested, weighed, chopped and packaged corn for quality analysis. University personnel conducted the statistical analyses and final reporting of hybrid performance.

Every effort was made to conduct the tests in an unbiased manner according to accepted agronomic practices. Corn hybrids were arranged in a randomized complete block design

with three replications at each farm. Hybrid seed was planted in four row plots with Wintersteiger Dynamic Disk precision planter that planted each plot at 32,000 seeds per acre. Fields were monitored for pests.

When most hybrids were near 35% dry matter (65% moisture), the two center rows of each plot were harvested with at John Deere 5400 modified for small plots. The entire harvested corn sample was weighed, and a subsample was collected.

Forage quality analyses and dry matter determination were from composite chopped samples of each hybrid at each location and were analyzed by Dairyland Labs, who also calculated milk and beef yield.

Hybrid performance reported here includes silage yield adjusted to 35% dry matter, milk yield per ton and per acre, beef per ton and per acre, in vitro true digestibility, crude protein, acid detergent fiber, neutral detergent fiber, and total digestible nutrients.

Silage yield was separated using the Least Significant Difference (or LSD).

The LSD is a method of separating hybrid performance from field variability. Hybrids with yields within one (1) LSD of each other have a very good chance of performing similar to each other next year.

2025 Season Comments

Corn silage trials were planted in Caldwell, Fayette, and Casey counties. The 2025 growing season started wet, delaying planting, then turned dry just before harvest. Due to adverse conditions, Casey County had to be excluded.

We thank our farmer cooperator, Woodrum Bros Farms, for allowing us access to his farm to conduct this trial.

MGMT	CALDWELL	FAYETTE
Planting	4/28/25	5/9/25
N/P/K	200/0/70	182/0/70
Soil	Crider Silt Loam	Lanton Silt Loam
Harvest	8/19/25	8/28/25

Table 2: Agronomic Practices



Department of Plant & Soil Sciences

Kentucky Crop Variety Testing

YOUR DAIRY CHECKOFF *IN KENTUCKY*

ADOPT A COW

Triple H Dairy in Center, Kentucky, is serving as the Kentucky host farm for the Adopt a Cow during the 2025–2026 school year. Through **1,190 registrations**, the program is reaching **67,737 students** in Kentucky with ongoing farm updates, educational resources, and live virtual chats that connect students directly with the farm.



SCHOOL MILK

Throughout 2025, The Dairy Alliance placed grant funding for innovative school milk programs in **33 schools** statewide. These efforts supported bulk milk dispensers, Moo Brew, smoothies, and mobile meals, reaching **22,163 students** and **15,581 adult stakeholders** through training and events.



NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH

In Kentucky, The Dairy Alliance highlighted the people behind the product through on-farm experiences and community events. Producers and fans celebrated at Bowling Green Hot Rods and Lexington Legends games with **more than 1,000 attendees**, while Southeast influencers visited Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese, sharing authentic dairy stories on social media and connecting consumers to Kentucky farms.

THIS DAIRY PROMOTION UPDATE HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DAIRY ALLIANCE™. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT ELISE CARPENTER BY PHONE AT 828-406-9482 OR VIA E-MAIL AT ECARPENTER@THEDAIRYALLIANCE.COM.

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Back to Whole? How School Milk Could Shift Dairy Demand

Daniel Munch Economist

Farmers and ranchers are facing rising costs, weak prices and uneven global competition that threaten their ability to stay in business. At the same time, policy decisions in Washington can increase market access, spur demand growth and ensure fair competition. This new Market Intel series will examine six priority policy areas - trade, biofuels, whole milk in schools, interstate commerce, transparent input markets and prioritizing U.S.-grown produce - and how each can help strengthen the farm economy and rural communities.

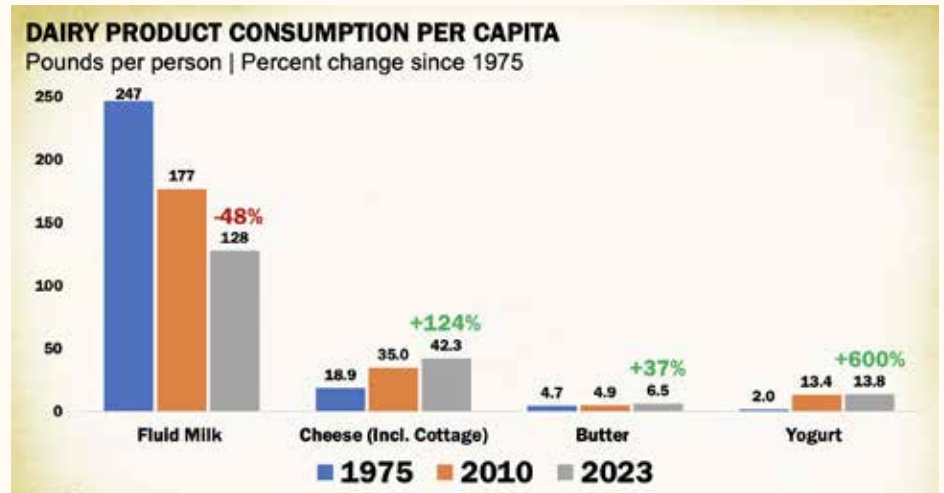
More than a decade after whole milk was removed from school cafeterias, Congress is reconsidering whether students should have the freedom to enjoy it - and its many nutrients. The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act (H.R. 649/S. 222) would overturn USDA's 2012 restrictions that have limited schools to providing only fat-free or 1% milk. The proposal, which aligns with recommendations from the Make America Healthy Again Commission, comes as policy makers, farmers and processors look to revitalize a category that has steadily lost market share and reconnect children to the benefits and taste of milk.

Behind the policy debate lies a broader market story: U.S. milk production is on pace to reach a record high in 2025 even as fluid consumption continues to decline. Allowing whole milk back into schools could provide a small but meaningful outlet for butterfat, a key driver of farm milk value, while giving local dairies new opportunities to serve their communities.

Background: Shifting Dairy Consumption

Fluid milk consumption in the U.S. has fallen nearly 50% since 1975 (from 247 pounds per person to 128 pounds in 2023), including a 28% drop since 2010. The decline is not uniform across dairy products, however. Cheese consumption (including cottage cheese) more than doubled from 18.8 pounds per person in 1975 to 42.3 pounds in 2023 (+124%). Butter use climbed from 4.7 to 6.5 pounds (+37%), and yogurt intake surged over 600%, from 1.9 to 13.8 pounds over the same period.

Whole milk stands out as a rare success story within the beverage category. Between 2013 and 2024, sales of whole and flavored whole milk grew by 16% (+2 billion pounds), while reduced-fat options lost ground: skim (-72%), 1% (-36%),



2% (-33%). Whole milk's share of total beverage sales rose from 27% to 38%.

Some consumers have shifted from reduced-fat to whole milk options, driven by the "protein boom," renewed interest in minimally processed foods and perhaps, more recently, growing demand among users of GLP-1 medications (drugs such as Ozempic and Wegovy that suppress appetite) for fuller-fat, higher-protein options that promote satiety and sustained energy.

Recent research indicates that about 38% of GLP-1 users report drinking more protein beverages, though it remains unclear whether this trend has specifically boosted whole milk consumption.

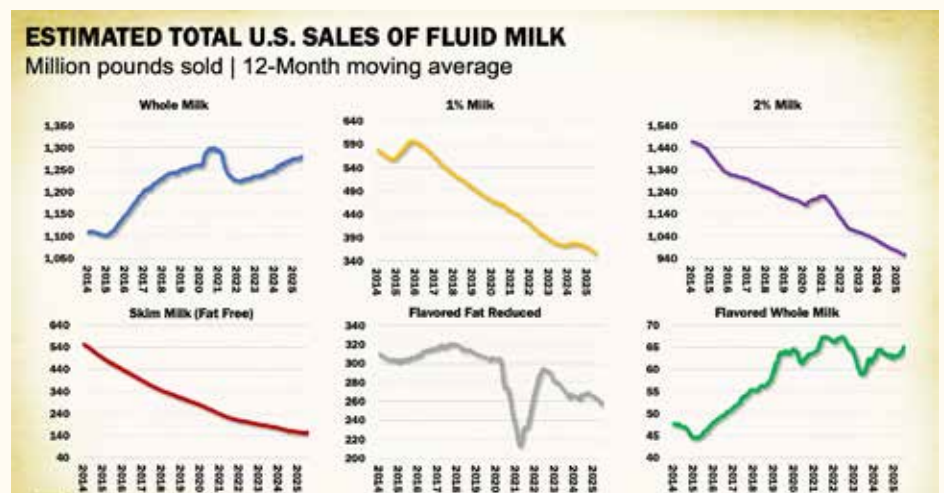
At the same time, complementary products like breakfast cereal have declined in popularity, eroding one of milk's strongest consumption anchors. Cereal and milk are

natural complements; as more consumers opt for coffee, breakfast bars or yogurt cups on the go, both cereal and milk sales have suffered.

Policy History: How Whole Milk Disappeared

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP), established in 1946, provides nutritious, low-cost meals to nearly 30 million students each day. Because schools account for roughly 7.5% of U.S. fluid milk sales, NSLP nutrition rules have long influenced dairy demand.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 sought to improve school nutrition by capping sodium, calories and saturated fat. Beginning in the 2012-13 school year, USDA rules restricted milk served in schools to fat-free or 1% varieties. Whole and 2% milk were no longer allowed, and flavored milk had to be fat-free. Later



updates permitted 1% flavored milk, but whole and 2% options have remained prohibited.

The rule coincided with a drop in student milk consumption. Between 2008 and 2018, weekly milk use per student fell from 4.03 to 3.39 cartons (-15%). Before 2012, consumption declined by 0.03 cartons per year; after the restriction, the rate accelerated to 0.13 cartons — a 77% faster decline. When students skip milk, both nutrition goals and dairy demand suffer. Those unopened cartons also create measurable food waste, raising costs for schools already operating on thin budgets.

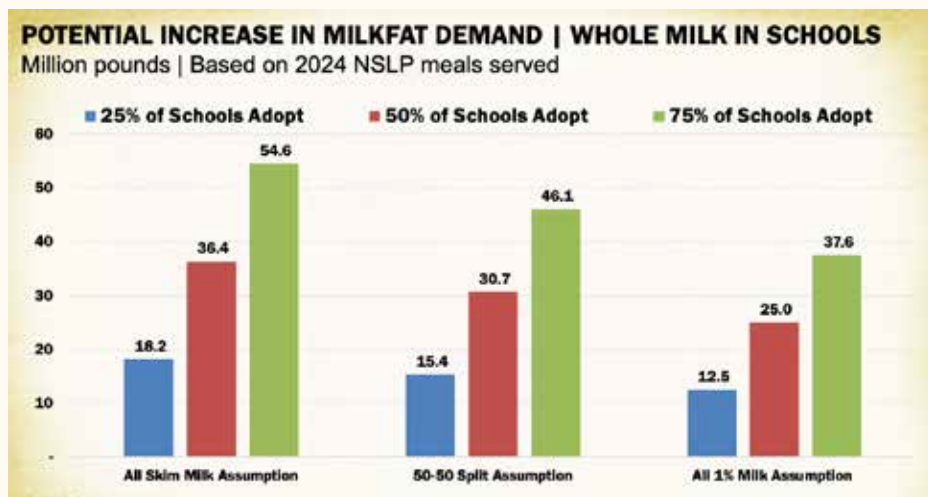
The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act

The bipartisan Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act introduced by Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-Pa.) in the House and Sen. Roger Marshall (R-Ks.) in the Senate, would restore flexibility by allowing schools to serve whole, 2%, 1%, or skim milk (flavored or unflavored) as reimbursable meals. It also clarifies that milkfat would not count toward the saturated-fat limit under school meal guidelines, ensuring compliance without penalizing higher-fat milk. The legislation includes a supply-chain requirement barring procurement from Chinese state-owned enterprises. As of October 2025, the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act has advanced out of both the House Education and Workforce Committee and the Senate Agriculture Committee by voice vote, but has yet to be considered by the full House or Senate for final passage.

Notably, the act does not mandate that schools switch to whole milk; instead, it permits them to do so. This distinction is central to how the market could react. Because adoption would likely occur gradually, driven by local preference, supplier capacity and budget realities, the resulting increase in milkfat demand would build over time rather than appear all at once.

Potential Market Impacts

Restoring whole milk to school menus would not mandate a universal switch, but even moderate adoption could reshape component demand across the dairy sector. The National School Lunch Program served 4.86 billion meals in 2024, with roughly 85% of students selecting milk — about 4.13 billion half-pint cartons of skim or 1% milk. Each carton of whole milk contains about 8 grams of fat, compared to 2.5 grams in 1% milk and virtually none in skim. This difference means that if schools begin offering whole milk again, every serving would draw an additional 5.5 to 8



grams of butterfat into the fluid stream that currently gets separated for butter, cheese or milk powder.

Under an all-skim baseline, if 25% of schools adopt whole milk (representing an early, conservative estimate), total milkfat utilization would rise by roughly 18 million pounds annually. If half of all schools make the switch, the increase grows to about 36 million pounds, and if three-quarters of schools adopt whole milk, the added fat demand reaches 55 million pounds per year. Assuming current milk offerings are evenly split between skim and 1%, the same adoption levels would boost butterfat demand by 15 million, 31 million and 46 million pounds, respectively. Even under the more conservative all -1% baseline, increased milkfat demand would total 13 million, 25 million and 38 million pounds across the three adoption tiers, respectively.

At the high end, a near-universal shift to whole milk could divert the equivalent of 45 million to 66 million pounds of finished butter into fluid use each year, based on the Federal Milk Marketing Order yield assumption that 1 pound of butterfat produces about 1.21 pounds of butter. That amounts to roughly 2-3% of total U.S. butter production, a significant reallocation of components from manufactured to beverage markets. This shift would come at a time when U.S. dairy farmers have already answered the call for more butterfat (boosting average butterfat levels more than 13% over the past decade) and would help capture greater value from that production in a market that often struggles to absorb the surplus fat. In practical terms, this means the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act could modestly tighten butter and cream supplies while lifting Class I utilization and overall blend prices.

Between January and July of this year, Class I (fluid) milk accounted for about 25% of total U.S. milk use (23 billion of

92 billion pounds). Increasing school milk sales and milkfat utilization would strengthen this category, which carries the highest regulated value under the recently amended Federal Milk Marketing Orders. Those changes, which restored the higher-of Class I mover and raised Class I differentials, already improved returns on milk sold into fluid channels. By pulling more butterfat into Class I use, schools could amplify the benefit of those reforms, helping to raise the uniform price farmers receive.

Even marginal increases in fluid demand can matter in an industry often oversupplied by just a few percentage points. Redirecting cream to bottled milk reduces low-value skim powder output, while higher butterfat utilization supports the value of components across all classes. For processors, whole milk simplifies production and reduces drying and storage costs. For smaller dairies, particularly those without separators, the ability to bottle and sell whole milk locally could open new farm-to-school opportunities.

Conclusion

While the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act would represent only a modest change in total milk use, it targets one of the few demand streams that can grow in the currently saturated market. Even small shifts in school milk sales can strengthen the Class I category, lift butterfat utilization and return more value to farmers. With 2025 milk production tracking at record highs and U.S. butterfat output already at historic levels, expanding whole milk options in schools would help absorb supply where it matters most — connecting students to the benefits and taste of milk and farmers to stronger milk checks.

EKU Agriculture Department Competes At The Southern Regional Dairy Challenge

Barbara Jones



(L-R) Madi Knapp, Hannah Murphy, Gracie Lynch, Kendall Clark, and Ryan Wilmot

The fall 2025 Eastern Kentucky University Dairy Challenge team participated in the Southern Regional Dairy Challenge in Knoxville, TN November 16-18, 2025. Dairy Challenge is the premier collegiate dairy experience where students combine theory and real-world application to a dairy farm while working in a team setting. This year's team members were Hannah Murphy, Gracie Lynch, Madi Knapp, Ryan Wilmot, and Kendall Clark.

At the regional competition,

university team members are split-up and students form aggregate teams to allow for a better learning experience. During the competition, students have access to the farm data in the form of PC Dart or Dairy Comp and financial records. After combing through the data, the students are given access to the farm to conduct a boots-on-the-ground-assessment. After the on-farm portion, students work with their team to complete a presentation of recommendations on how the farm can improve and how the suggested

improvements will impact the farm financially. Presentations are made to a panel of experts in the dairy industry.

This fast-paced competition is so important for students' development. We look forward to competing at the National Dairy Challenge in April in South Dakota. We also look forward to EKU hosting the fall 2026 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge for the first time ever. We are so thankful to KDDC for supporting our team!



THE DAIRY ALLIANCE

AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS UPDATE



Elise Carpenter, Ag Affairs Manager for KY & TN, and Celia Johnson, Southeast College Dairy Ambassador, attended the Kentucky Farm Bureau State Convention in Louisville. The event provided opportunities to connect with industry leaders, producers, and partners to discuss local priorities and efforts to strengthen the dairy sector while supporting Kentucky dairy farm families.

The Dairy Alliance was a sponsor at this year's North American International Livestock Expo. As part of the sponsorship, a pizza lunch and goodie bags were provided for youth who purchased cattle in the All-American Jersey Pot of Gold Sale, recognizing their dedication to the dairy industry. Elise Carpenter attended to support participants and connect with families and industry partners.



The Dairy Alliance partnered with the Kentucky Dairy Development Council to host a booth at Dare to Dairy at Eastern Kentucky University. Throughout the day, 85 students visited the booth to explore dairy educational materials and participate in a butter churning activity. Elise Carpenter led the activity, engaging students in conversations about dairy farming, nutrition, and the role dairy plays in supporting farm families and communities.

This quarter, Elise Carpenter traveled across Kentucky in an effort to keep dairy farm families informed and connected with the dairy checkoff. Through district meetings and on-farm visits, she engaged directly with dairy farm families, reaching more than 150 farmers across the state. These efforts helped wrap up 2025 outreach while allowing time to share updates, gather producer feedback, and strengthen relationships.



This dairy promotion update has been brought to you by THE DAIRY ALLIANCE™. For more information, contact Elise Carpenter by phone at (270) 970-4792 or via e-mail at ecarpenter@thedairyalliance.com.



Milk. A part of everything that's good.

Southland Dairy Farmers are excited for 2026 and all the great events and partnerships in Kentucky this year! The calendar is filling up with school visits, athletic programs, and other community events providing opportunities to educate on the importance of the dairy in diets as well as all the hard work that goes into getting it to consumers across the state.

Last year, Southland Dairy Farmers began a new partnership with Kentucky Youth Soccer to promote the nutritional benefits of milk and other dairy products. This campaign reached over 43,000 athletes as well as their families. Athletic partnerships have always been a great way for Southland Dairy Farmers to help demonstrate the importance of dairy for active bodies, especially chocolate milk "The Original Sports Drink."

Special Olympics Kentucky is an event Southland Dairy Farmers look forward to every year. The ice cream giveaway is a favorite for athletes and their families. This incredible event has been a fantastic way for Kentucky dairy farmers to be represented in their community while also giving back.

The Kentucky State Fair is far and away Southland Dairy Farmers' largest event in the state, with a chance for the Mobile Dairy Classroom to reach the fair's nearly 600,000 visitors each year. In addition, Southland Dairy Farmers support the future of the industry by making a donation and putting a cheese basket together to help sponsor the Junior Dairy Show. Last year, enough money was raised to allow every showman to receive some. This year we hope to help reach that feat once again.

Since Louisville is also home to the International Livestock Expo, Southland Dairy Farmers makes sure to represent our local supporters. As well as being a sponsor, the Mobile Dairy Classroom is out there throughout the week giving presentations and milking demonstrations throughout the day.

High schools across the state can apply for the Chocolate Milk Grant, which awards up to \$2,500 towards the purchase of chocolate milk, The Original Sports Drink, for their sports team. The number of applications continues to rise each year in Kentucky and Southland is ready to hand out more this year. Applications are accepted year-round and can be found on our website www.southlanddairyfarmers.com.

The Mobile Dairy Classroom continues to travel across the state to schools and events for free thanks to our local supporting dairy farmers. Our cows and instructors take pride in the opportunity to teach the public about the dairy industry, dairy cows, and what it takes to get milk from the farm to their table. Each presentation concludes with a live milking demonstration and Q & A session. Requests for the Mobile Dairy Classroom can be made on our website at www.southlanddairyfarmers.com.



The Kentucky 4-H Dairy Judging Team is an all-star team made up of 4-H'ers from across Kentucky who have participated in the state 4-H dairy judging contest, and workshops throughout the summer. The top four are chosen to represent Kentucky at the National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest. The 2025 Kentucky 4-H Dairy Judging Team members are: Aeryn Grimes from LaRue County, Haylee Tucker who is a member of Jessamine County 4-H, Cyrus Biven from LaRue County and Jordyn McDonald who attends Cumberland County High School. These 4-H members represented Kentucky at two contests this fall.

The first contest was the Pennsylvania All-American Dairy Judging Contest in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The team finished seventh in the contest overall and was the fourth high team in oral reasons. The following individual results were: Jordyn McDonald was third place in Ayrshire and was eighth high in Oral Reasons; Aeryn Grimes was ninth place in Brown Swiss; Cyrus Bivens was 8th High Individual in Holstein and Haylee Tucker was fifth high individual in oral reasons and twelfth high individual overall.

The team then prepared for the National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest by traveling to farms across Illinois and Wisconsin to practice their dairy judging skills. They also had the opportunity to tour the Hoard's Dairyman Farm, the Dairy Shrine and Museum and the historic town of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. They competed in the National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest against 24 other states. In this contest they had to place 10 classes of heifers and cows as well as defend their placing on five different classes. They received scores for all of these which were totaled to get the following results. The team finished tenth overall as a team and was the third-place team in the Guernsey breed, and placed ninth in oral reasons as a team. Individually, Haylee Tucker became one of the newest members of the All-American Club placing fourteenth overall and was twelfth in oral reasons. Jordyn McDonald was eleventh in Brown Swiss Reasons.

The team would like to thank all the friends and businesses who have allowed them to practice at their farms or given to the Kentucky 4-H Foundation to support the Kentucky 4-H Dairy Judging Program. The team is coached by Larissa Tucker, Extension Associate for Dairy at the University of Kentucky.

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FEB 5-9	North American Farmers Direct Marketing Assoc. Agritourism Convention Expo <i>Orlando, FL</i>
FEB 24	2026 Commodity Classic <i>San Antonio, TX</i>
FEB 25-27	2026 Commodity Classic <i>San Antonio, TX</i>
FEB 27-28	Eastern Kentucky Farmers Conference <i>Corbin, KY</i>
MAR 6-8	KFB Beef Expo <i>Louisville, KY</i>
MAR 15-21	All-In-for-Ag Week
JUN 9-11	State FFA Convention <i>Lexington, KY</i>



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