

KENTUCKY

# MILK

MATTERS

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## Kentucky Dairy Conference (More on pages 6-9)



## 2025 KDDC Board of Directors & Staff

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Vice President: Dr. Charles Townsend  
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Kentucky Milk Matters produced by Carey Brown



## Sumner Elected 2026 President of the Kentucky Dairy Development Council

*Tori Embry*

At the Kentucky Dairy Development Council's 2026 Annual Meeting, Thomas Sumner of Warren County was elected to serve as President of the KDDC Board of Directors. This is an annually-elected appointment which has been filled by Freeman Brundige of Fulton County since 2017. Brundige will continue to serve on the Executive Committee as Past President as Sumner steps into his new role.

The Sumners own and operate a 250-cow dairy in Smiths Grove, Kentucky. Alan and Patti Sumner, Thomas's parents, began the operation in 1979. Thomas grew up on the dairy and attended the University of Kentucky, where he studied Agriculture. After graduation, he returned to the dairy operation and has worked there full-time since 2018. He has contributed to several on-farm projects during that time, including the addition of a housing facility to increase the size of the milking herd, increasing milk storage capacity, and installing a Delaval parlor. Thomas and his wife, Molly, have one son named Maverick.

Thomas has served on the Kentucky Dairy Development Council Board since 2022 as the District 2 and Central Region Director. In 2025, he was elected to serve on the Executive Committee as the Vice President. He has also participated on the Young Producers of Kentucky Steering Committee and various Hiring Committees. Sumner has been active in offering suggestions to the KDDC Board and staff and his contributions have shaped some recent changes our organization has made.

When asked how he meant to serve the industry within this role, Thomas spoke to the importance of community and KDDC's role in supporting the industry.

Thomas stated, "KDDC can bring farmers together. We all have the same problems and are in it together. We can find better solutions when we come together rather than tackling it on our own."

His goal is to ensure that KDDC is the driver that helps build and strengthen the industry by connecting producers to other producers, as well as outside opportunities. The KDDC staff look forward to his partnership in achieving this goal.

Additionally, KDDC saw several other changes in the 2026 Executive Committee and Board. Dr. Charles Townsend of Barren County and Matt Collins of Madison County were voted on to the Executive Committee in the roles of Vice President and Member At-Large, respectively. Other new additions to the KDDC board include Michael Hunt of Butler County as Western Region Producer Director and Dr. Megan Taylor of Barren County as Allied Industry Director. We look forward to these changes in the leadership and guidance of KDDC and hope you will join us in welcoming everyone to their new positions!

# DAIRY IMPACT PROGRAM 2026

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*Programming for the development of  
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## Executive Director Comments

Tori Embry

After a winter that seems like it has stretched out with little reprieve from the cold, damp, and too much ice, we have finally been given a little hint of spring. As the weather starts to change, so too does work on the farm and at KDDC.

We are coming to the end of a successful, busy meeting season at KDDC. We have had the opportunity to attend several great events throughout the winter, including the Kentucky Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, the Georgia Dairy Conference, the Kentucky Proud Legislative Breakfast, and last but definitely not least, the Kentucky Dairy Conference. We at KDDC work to not only advocate for the Kentucky dairy industry at these meetings and events but also learn from them and bring that knowledge back to Kentucky farms. You can see that as we educate on the impact of increased milk weights on all types of operations as HB 258 is being discussed this legislative session. You can see it when you talk to KDDC consultants about the industry's latest trends and updates. And I hope you can see that as we plan for the upcoming year and make

changes to better suit our future.

So, what can you expect from KDDC for the rest of this year? For starters, I'm proud to say that after more than a year of working to fill all of the positions on our team, we are now fully staffed with knowledgeable, dedicated folks that are working hard to better the industry. I encourage you to spend a minute looking at the inside panel of this newsletter or on our website to see where everyone is at and save their contact information. We're all here to serve the Kentucky dairy industry.

Next, you can expect some of the same great programming we have been able to offer over the last year. The Dairy Impact Program from KDDC with support from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund is accepting applications until April 30th. You can find more information on the program in this newsletter or by reaching out to your regional consultant. Last year, we were able to fund 11 on-farm projects that allowed producers to plan for their future and accomplish projects

that would get them there. This year, we hope to fund even more projects, with a heightened interest for innovative, future-thinking projects. This is what keeps farms in business and continuing on to the next generation and we want to do our best to support that.

We have many of our same events to mark on your calendar this year, although some may look a little different than they did in the past. You can plan for Dairy Nights at the Ballgame to celebrate June Dairy Month with us. After a year or two off, we will be bringing our Summer Tour back to check out some innovative operations here in Kentucky. The Young Producers of Kentucky group will be back up and running this year with monthly dates to tour operations. And our Fall Tour will be back on the books, although we will be going a different direction this year. Similarly, we are already making plans for the 2027 Kentucky Dairy Conference, with big changes on that front as well. We are so excited about this line up of events, jam-packed with tradition and updates, and can't wait to share more details soon!

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**BOWLING GREEN HOT RODS**  
**JUNE 26TH**



# 2026 Kentucky Dairy Conference

## Showcased Solutions for Kentucky Dairies

*Jared Patterson KDDC Consultant*

The 2026 Kentucky Dairy Conference was held at the Sloan Convention Center on February 24-25, 2026. We saw 150 attendees during the day and a half event, along with industry members and 35 vendors from the state and throughout the country.

Tuesday was jam-packed with sessions, a full tradeshow, and several breakout opportunities. Bryce Windecker and Owen Tevalde with Ever.Ag presented on “Managing Risk on Your Dairy Operation.” This session focused on risk management and the market outlook on dairy- a topic especially relevant given the market outlooks for 2026. Complimenting this session, Cara Stewart with Kentucky Center of Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD), discussed “Funding and Programs for Kentucky Dairy Producers” in a breakout session that allowed small-group discussions. Craig Cohron and Dennis Brown with Byron Seeds also presented during a breakout session and discussed “Selecting Silage Corn Hybrids and Forage” with producers. With new varieties coming on the scene every year, this was a topic that proved engaging and informative.

The second half of the day focused on a topic that many Kentucky producers find challenging: milk quality. The topic was introduced with a producer panel featuring Brian Long of Barren County, Elizebeth Lunsford of Allen County, Thomas Sumner of Warren County, and Patrick Patterson of Pulaski County. These producers discussed unique perspectives that encompassed the spectrum of operations present in Kentucky and focused on challenges around managing milk quality on their farm. Some interesting take home points came from Long and Sumner discussing the importance of getting your team invested in maintaining high milk quality by giving them

responsibility, informing them of numbers regularly, and creating reliable routines. Patterson discussed how he sees good milk quality as something the cows should maintain on their own, and his goal is to remove any barriers that may cause issues with achieving that. Lunsford was able to discuss quality from the plant side and from animal health industry. She made it clear that good milk quality doesn't just happen- it has to be prioritized, managed, and maintained.

Following this panel, Dr. Roger Thomson with MQ-IQ Consulting, Inc and Michigan State University dug into the details of milk quality. Dr. Thomson's session “Milking System Analysis and CIP Training” provided valuable details that are fundamental for maintaining the parlor and milk quality. He followed up this talk with a demonstration “Using The Teaching Parlor: A Milking Systems Simulator.” The presentation was a great interactive experience for the audience to correctly perform ISO/NMC airflow analysis on milking parlors and attendees took home information to apply to their own operations.

After a day of learning, we celebrated Kentucky's dairy producers at the Kentucky Dairy Awards Banquet. Mr. Warren Beeler, Deputy Commissioner at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, gave a keynote that inspired pride in our industry. During the banquet, we heard impactful and heartfelt comments from Maury Cox, Meredith Scales, and Freeman Brundige honoring former KDDC employee, friend, and key member in the Kentucky dairy industry, Dave Roberts. Brundige also announced an event that KDDC will host annually to honor Dave's memory by doing what he did best- offering support and education for dairy producers. More details will be announced regarding this event soon. Our live auction,

which supports youth involved in dairy programs, raised \$2,415 and the silent auction raised \$1,600. Thank you to those who generously donated unique items, including an antique milk can from England donated by Alan Childs and an early 1900's Kendall and Whitney butter churn donated by Alan Harrison. This auction could not be held without the participation of donors and bidders and we appreciate the support!

We kept the momentum on the second day, starting with a session from Heather Vankleek with Kentucky Department of Education. Vankleek spoke on The Dairy Alliance School Milk initiative. The initiative focuses on promoting milk in school systems throughout the state, as students are a major consumer of milk in the Southeast. We then moved on to the next session with Dr. Derek Nolan from the University of Illinois. Dr. Nolan spoke on “Understanding Mastitis Relationships”. This session was informative, giving audience members a deeper understanding on how mastitis can be treated and how we can help prevent this problem. We wrapped up the conference with our last speakers. Dr. Beth Johnson from the Office of State Veterinarian and Dr. Christopher Craig from USDA-APHIS gave an animal health update and spoke about on-farm biosecurity. KDDC provided biosecurity bundles, including posters, logs, and biosecurity plans, to producers to support this session. If interested in receiving one of these bundles, contact your regional KDDC consultant.

We had a great conference this year and gained a lot of knowledge regarding a variety of topics relevant in the dairy industry. We look forward to next year's conference and cannot wait to learn more about the great things happening in the industry.

# 2025 KDDC State Production Awards

Top Herds - 4.0% Fat Corrected RHA Milk by Herd Size

*Sponsored by Kentucky Farm Bureau unless noted otherwise*

Under 50 Cows

First Place

**Amos Esh Jr.**

*Christian County*

Second Place

**Elam K. Fisher**

*Christian County*

Third Place

**Ben E. Stoltzfus**

*Caldwell County*

51-100 Cows

First Place

**Kevin Coblentz**

*Todd County*

Second Place

**Jonathan Coblentz**

*Todd County*

Third Place

**Ricky Nuckols**

*Barren County*

101-400 Cows

First Place

**Ethan Horst**

*Lincoln County*

Second Place

**H&H Dairy**

*Adair County*

Third Place

**Jeffrey Strite**

*Lincoln County*

Over 400 Cows

First Place

**Robey Farms**

*Logan County*

Second Place

**Kenneth &  
Matthew Horst**

*Lincoln County*

Third Place

**James A.  
Cowherd & Son**

*Taylor County*

The Gary Lane  
Production Award Winner

**Robey Farms**

*Logan County*

The Gary Lane 2nd Place  
Production Award

**Kenneth & Matthew Horst**

*Lincoln County*

The Gary Lane 3rd Place  
Production Award

**Kevin Coblentz**

*Todd County*

Kentucky Milk  
Quality Award

**Roger Lawhorn**

*Adair County*

Kentucky Milk  
Quality Hauler Award

**Aaron Logan**

*Owen Transport Services, LLC*

Young Dairy Producer  
of Kentucky Award

**John Riney**

*Washington County*

*This award is sponsored by  
South Central Bank*

Kentucky Dairy  
Promoter of the Year

**Dan Grigson**

*This award is sponsored by  
The Dairy Alliance*





# Whole Milk is Back: The Dairy Farmers Who Witnessed History, and the Whirlwind Trip to Get There

*With a giant bottle of milk on the desk, President Donald Trump signed a law bringing whole milk back to schools. Here's the story of the farmers and families who witnessed the historic moment.*

*Tyne Morgan*

What would you do if the White House called and asked you to get on a plane the next day to be part of a bill signing? For several dairy farmers this week, that whirlwind invitation became reality.

The occasion? President Donald Trump signing the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act into law, legislation aimed at giving students across the country access to whole milk in school lunches, a move the administration is calling “common sense” for both nutrition and parental choice.

“Whether you’re a Democrat or a Republican, whole milk is a great thing,” Trump said during the signing, surrounded by farmers, legislators and a giant bottle of milk on the desk. “I’m delighted to sign the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act into law, which is very important for our farmers and maybe even more important for the people that drink milk.”

USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins highlighted the nutritional benefits, noting that the law allows schools to expand milk offerings beyond low-fat or nonfat options within just a few weeks.

“It’s a big announcement for our schools and our children,” Rollins said, emphasizing that the law empowers parents to make milk choices for their children without requiring medical exemptions.

For New Mexico dairy farmer Tara Vander Dussen, a fifth-generation dairy farmer and host of the “Discover Ag” podcast, she didn’t just experience the White House for

herself; she actually attended the signing with her two daughters, making sure the experience was unforgettable.

“Oh my gosh, it was such a whirlwind,” Vander Dussen tells U.S. Farm Report. “I got the call on Monday, and within 24 hours, I needed to be in D.C. Thankfully, my mom packed everything in less than three hours so we could make it. I was on vacation with my husband, so it was a crazy scramble, but we made it.”

Van Dussen says she almost turned down the invitation, as she was already on a trip and her girls were back at home in New Mexico, but she knew this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity she needed to make a reality for her family.

“Not only was it an incredible opportunity to meet the president, for the girls to meet him, but this is a huge win for dairy farmers across the country, a huge one for school-aged kids that depend on school lunches,” the New Mexico dairy farmer says. “And Trump, I think, said it best when he said, this is common sense. Why can’t kids have whole milk? And it’s not just a win for whole milk; it’s also a win for parents’ choice. So before this bill was passed, if you wanted to have your kids have an alternative milk option, you had to have a sign to know from a doctor. Now parents can make that choice themselves.”

The White House signing included farmers from operations of all sizes. USDA highlighted attendees like William Thiele, who milks 40 to 60 cows in Butler County, Pa., and Jamie Witcpalek, of Pagel’s

Ponderosa Dairy, LLC from Wisconsin, who manages 5,000 cows.

“This is such a monumental day in agriculture, not just for dairy farmers, but for all of agriculture,” Thiele said during the White House signing. “It helps producers, processors and these kids. It’s a perfect piece of legislation, a great day for America.”

U.S. Farm Report had the chance to talk to Thiele fresh off his trip to D.C. this week. He also emphasized the nutritional impact of the law, noting that the fat in whole milk is beneficial.

“I believe it was Secretary Brooke Rollins and Secretary Robert Kennedy [who] said yesterday about how important this is to growing children’s diet and for brain health, brain function and physical health and all those things,” he says.

The signing marked the first bill of the year and quickly became a social media sensation, with images of Trump as the “Milk Man” and USDA posts celebrating the law’s passage. For dairy producers, it was a moment of recognition and celebration, a rare spotlight for an industry often overlooked.

This historic signing brings a personal element to legislative victories, a reminder that policy decisions can directly impact farmers’ livelihoods and children’s nutrition. For the dairy families who boarded planes at a moment’s notice, it was a trip of a lifetime and a reason to toast milk instead of debate it.

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*Dr. George Heersche, Jr. was recently recognized at the Kentucky Volunteer Forum as the National 4-H Hall of Fame member. His family was present to receive this award in his honor. Pictured are Scott Heersche, Larissa Tucker, Charla Heersche-Hampton, Kimberly Heersche, Kathy Heersche, Ken Culp (nominated George for the award), and Linda Branstetter, past recipient, and dairy volunteer. It is an honor to see Dr. Heersche recognized for his over 40 years of service to the youth of Kentucky 4-H.*

## Honoring Dr. George Heersche Jr.: A Legacy of Service, Mentorship, and Dedication

In 2024, Dr. George Heersche Jr. was inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame, recognizing decades of extraordinary service, leadership, and commitment to agricultural education. A longtime professor in the University of Kentucky Department of Animal and Food Sciences, Dr. Heersche Jr. devoted his life to advancing dairy science, mentoring youth, and strengthening the 4-H program across Kentucky and beyond.

Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Heersche served as the State Dairy Extension Professor, a 4-H volunteer, and an invaluable educator to thousands of students. His legacy is rooted not only in the programs he built but in the personal connections he fostered. Many of his students affectionately knew him as “Doc Choc”, and countless individuals still carry his sayings and teachings with them today. One of his favorite sayings went—“Well, we’re just going to have to agree to disagree”—captured both his patience and his approachable, good-natured leadership style.

For 45 years, Dr. Heersche shaped the future of youth in agriculture through his deep involvement in 4-H dairy programs. He coached the Kentucky 4-H Dairy Judging Team, leading them to three national championships, and he coordinated the first North American Invitational 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Contest, an event that has since become a cornerstone of national youth dairy education. From 1978 to 2020, he served

as chair of the National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest Management Committee, guiding the contest’s growth and ensuring its continued excellence.

He served as the Youth Dairy Show Superintendent for the Kentucky State Fair and as Superintendent for the North American Invitational Dairy Cattle Judging Contest, roles through which he supported generations of young exhibitors and leaders in the dairy industry.

Although Dr. Heersche officially retired from the University of Kentucky in 2020, his dedication never wavered. He continued to serve as an adviser, mentor, and source of wisdom for students, colleagues, and volunteers until his passing in 2023. Tragically, he passed before he could be inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame, an honor he richly deserved.

It is with profound respect and gratitude that we recognize Dr. George Heersche Jr. once more for his extraordinary contributions to the 4-H dairy program, the University of Kentucky, and the countless students whose lives he shaped. His legacy of mentorship, service, and unwavering commitment to youth development will continue to inspire future generations.

Recently, at the biannual Kentucky 4-H Volunteer Forum, the family of Dr. George Heersche Jr. accepted an award on his behalf, recognizing him once again for his induction into the National 4-H Hall of Fame in 2024.

## Milk Prices

**FMMO 5**

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**February 2026**

**Class 1 Advanced Price**

**(@3.5% BF)**

**\$20.30**

**March 2026**

**Class 1 Advanced Price**

**(@3.5% BF)**

**\$21.07**

**FMMO 7**

[www.fmmlanta.com](http://www.fmmlanta.com)

**February 2026**

**Class 1 Advanced Price**

**(@3.5%)**

**\$20.50**

**March 2026**

**Class 1 Advanced Price**

**(@3.5%)**

**\$21.27**

# GROUND-TRUTHING DRONE FUNGICIDE EFFICACY

Kiersten Wise, Tim Stombaugh, Will Barlow University of Kentucky

## Objective

Unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV or drone) fungicide applications have become more common in Kentucky, allowing farmers who may not have access to high-clearance or aerial applicators to apply fungicides to corn. On-farm research initiated by the University of Kentucky in several counties has indicated that foliar fungicides applied by a drone at VT/R1 can effectively manage gray leaf spot in corn when using recommended spray carrier volumes. However, drone fungicide applications are anecdotally described by some as the “third-best option” behind fixed-wing or helicopter aerial application methods and high-clearance ground application, despite limited evidence of those claims. There are also questions about optimizing the swath width (spray width) of drones to prevent gaps in coverage on the edges of applications. Maximum swath widths are provided for each type of drone, but there is limited replicated research data on the reliability of these recommendations. Preliminary research from our program comparing drone vs. ground fungicide applications did indicate that both application methods provided similar levels of disease control and yield response. However, disease pressure was low in these trials. Understanding how drone fungicide application parameters affect disease development will aid farmers in setting up their own drones and improve commercial applicator efficacy by providing optimized settings for application. The specific objectives of this research were to 1) compare fungicide spray coverage, deposition, and efficacy of high-clearance ground applications to drone fungicide applications, and 2) determine the impact of spray parameters on drone sprayer swath coverage for fungicide applications.



Fungicide applications by drones are a viable way to apply fungicide in corn, but more research is needed to optimize the applications for disease control and yield benefits.

## Methods & Materials

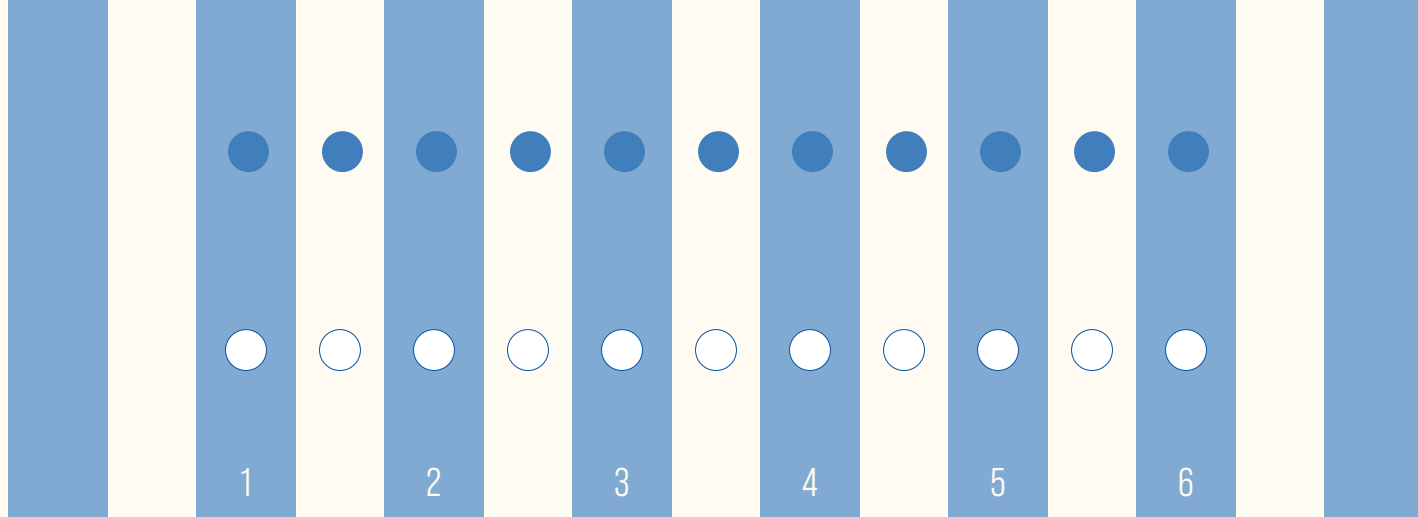
Research trials were established at the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center in Princeton, KY in 2024. In each trial, the spray solution consisted of the fungicide prothioconazole + trifloxystrobin + fluopyram (Delaro Complete; 8 fl oz/A), non-ionic surfactant (0.25% v), 1,3,8-pyrenetetrasulfonic acid (PTSA; 600 ppm), and basic violet dye 10 or acid blue 009 (1% v/v) applied to corn at tasseling/silking (VT/R1) using a DJI T-10 drone or a ground sprayer. Experimental plots were eight rows (20 ft) by 70 ft in length and treatments in each trial were replicated four times in a randomized complete block design. To compare the effect of spray application method on fungicide efficacy, the fungicide spray solution was applied to experimental plots via

drone or ground application methods using carrier volumes of 2.5 and 15 gallons per acre (gpa), respectively. A non-fungicide-treated control was included in this experiment. Fungicide coverage was determined by measuring the percentage of violet or acid blue dye coverage on ten phytochrome spray cards per plot using image scanning and processing software. Fungicide spray solution deposited in the canopy was collected by rinsing selected leaves with isopropyl alcohol immediately after application and measuring isopropyl/PTSA mixture for fluorescence using a fluorometer. Three measurements were obtained per leaf and compared to a calibration curve. Leaf area of collected leaves was measured, and fungicide deposition was verified by calculating the  $\mu\text{l}/\text{cm}^2$  of spray

Treatment	Drone Application Height	Drone Application Speed	Percentage of Spray Coverage
1	7.5	14	2.76A <sup>1</sup>
2	7.5	19	1.19 B
3	10	14	2.15 A
4	10	19	1.49 B
P-value			0.0413

1. Values followed by different letters are significantly different at the  $P=0.05$  level

**Table 1:** Spray application parameter treatments used to determine effect of application on spray deposition, spray coverage and foliar disease control at the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center in Princeton KY in 2024. Percent spray coverage measured on phytochrome spray cards collected from ear leaves in treated plots.



**Figure 1:** Example experimental sample plan for a research plot in a trial examining the effect of spray parameters on spray coverage and deposition and foliar disease at the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center in Princeton, KY in 2024. Numbers indicate sampled rows of the experimental plot white circles represent plants where ear leaves were sampled for spray deposition analysis, and blue circles represent plants that had phytochrome spray cards placed on the ear and ear + 1 leaves.

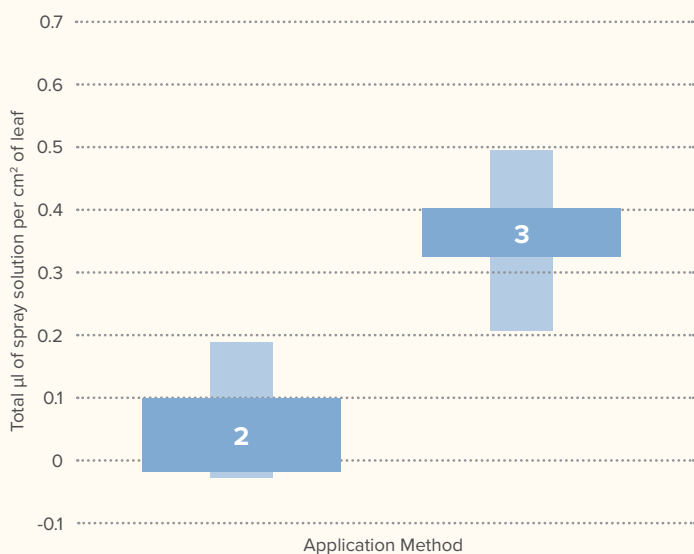
solution deposited from five leaves per plot. Preliminary experiments were conducted to determine the impact of spray parameters on swath coverage. The DJI-T10 applied a spray solution of water + acid blue 009 at 1% v/v over 3-inch bond paper stretched across a 50-ft section of ground. The spray coverage on the bond paper was analyzed using a Swath Gobbler™ (Application Insight, LLC), which determined that at most application speeds and heights, a 10-ft swath width was appropriate for the drone model

used in the experiment. Based on these results, we examined whether this swath width remains consistent in the corn canopy at four different spray parameters and a carrier volume of 2.5 gpa (Table 1). To measure spray deposition and coverage across the swath in the corn canopy, spray cards and leaf samples were collected from the ear leaf or ear + 1 leaf across a 15-ft swath in the center of each experimental plot. Each card and leaf were labeled by position in the plot and along the width of the swath

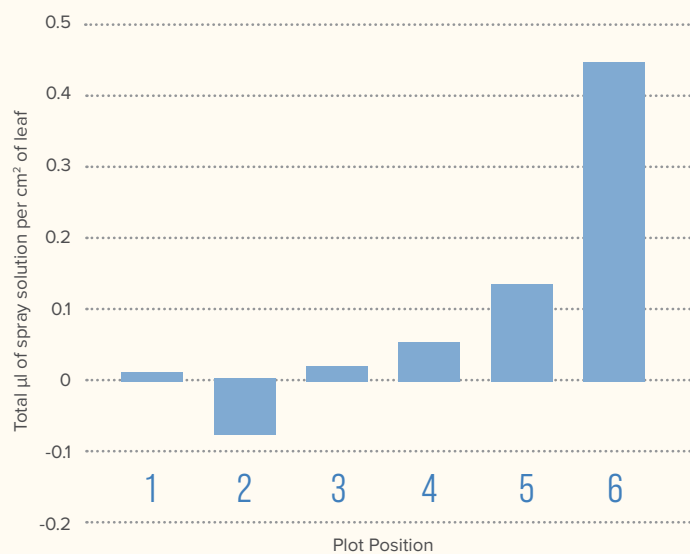
to determine if spray deposition or coverage were greater at any point along the length of the spray swath (Figure 1).

Spray coverage and deposition for samples were measured as described above. For both trials, percent foliar disease severity on the ear leaf was rated for 10 plants per plot at dough (R4). Data were analyzed using mixed model analysis of variance in SAS (v.9.4, Cary, NC) and treatment means separated using least square means.

continued on page 14



**Figure 2:** Effect of application method on spray deposition in a corn trial conducted at the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center in Princeton KY in 2024. Treatment 2 represents drone application, and Treatment 3 represents ground application.



**Figure 3:** Total spray solution deposited across the drone swath width for treatments applied at different heights and speeds in a corn trial conducted at the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center in Princeton KY in 2024. Plot position indicated the plant sampling position across a swath and indicating spray deposition from left to right in the plot (Fig. 1).

## Results & Discussion

Spray deposition was greater with high-clearance ground spray applications compared to drone applications (Figure 2). Spray parameters influenced spray coverage (Table 1), with lower spray coverage observed in treatments with higher flight speeds. Spray deposition and spray coverage were greater on one edge of each treated plot, indicating that spray movement may occur within each treatment, even though wind speeds were at or lower than 4.4 mph during application (Figure 3). Drought conditions in June delayed disease onset and development, and dry conditions persisted through August and September, limiting disease development. Gray leaf spot and southern rust were present at

less than 1% disease severity, which limits the ability to determine the effect of application method and spray parameters on foliar disease control.

## Conclusion

- Although ground application of fungicide resulted in greater spray coverage and deposition compared to drone application, its impact on controlling foliar diseases remains uncertain. In other research trials within this program, drone applications have demonstrated similar effectiveness in reducing gray leaf spot as ground applications. However, further research is needed to confirm these findings.
- Drone fungicide applications at higher speeds resulted in reduced spray coverage. Spray coverage

and deposition were greater at one edge of the experimental plots throughout the experiment. This indicates spray movement occurred in all treatments, even under low wind speeds.

- Fungicide applications by drones are a viable way to apply fungicide in corn, but more research is needed to optimize the applications for disease control and yield benefits.

## Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the Kentucky Corn Growers Association for funding this research, and the UKREC Farm Crew, Luke Warner, Nathan Hale, Jack Kocher, Catlin Young and Jacey Jagers for assistance in establishing and maintaining the research and aiding data collection.



Milk. A part of everything that's good.

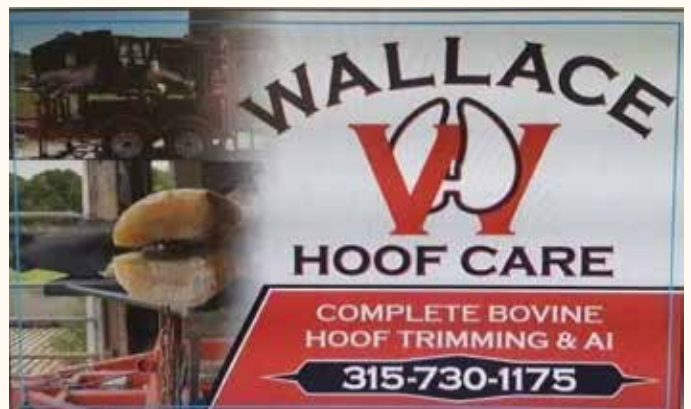
## Helping Students Fuel Up with Chocolate Milk

Southland Dairy Farmers has long been a promoter of chocolate milk for post-workout recovery beginning with the slogan “Chocolate Milk: The Original Sports Drink”. With 13 essential vitamins and nutrients chocolate milk is one of the most effective drinks to help restore energy and build strength, making it the ideal choice for athletes. Southland Dairy Farmers provide a way to help show high school athletes the difference chocolate milk can make through our Chocolate milk grants.

Chocolate Milk grants are offered to high school sports teams across Kentucky, helping to supply chocolate milk for the entirety of a team’s season. By helping supply them with chocolate milk, Southland Dairy Farmers can show firsthand what a difference it can make after a tough workout or a long game.

In providing student athletes with chocolate milk, Southland Dairy Farmers are also helping kids create healthy habits for the future. Teaching the importance of dairy nutrition not only in developing but also maintaining strength and energy is a lesson the students can continue to carry throughout their lives.

If you or anyone you know would like to apply for a chocolate milk grant for your local sports team, visit [southlanddairyfarmers.com](http://southlanddairyfarmers.com) and click the link at the top.





**THE DAIRY  
ALLIANCE**

## AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

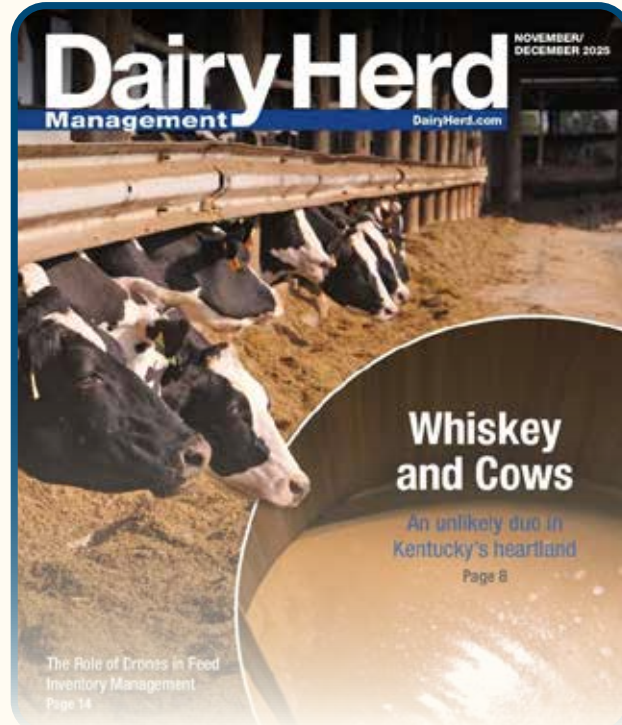
# Wave Makers

THE DAIRY ALLIANCE  
thedairyalliance.com

The new year kicked off with a fresh round of Digital Dairy Ambassadors, spotlighting real stories from real farms. Over the next six months, Shelby Traylor of 56 Heart of Dixie Dairy (AL), Brittany Moon of Over the Moon Dairy (GA), and **Brady and Shelby Core of Keightly and Core Jersey Farm (KY)** will share positive, authentic perspectives on modern dairy farming. Through social media, they will engage consumers and strengthen connections to real dairy farms.

In January, ten students were selected as 2026 Southeast High School and College Dairy Ambassadors. These students were chosen to represent The Dairy Alliance, serving as dairy advocates at local events in the Southeast. Among them is **Emma Davidson of Western Kentucky University**, who will help promote and educate at events across the Commonwealth.

THE DAIRY ALLIANCE  
**SOUTHEAST  
DAIRY  
AMBASSADORS**



In partnership with Dairy Management Inc., The Dairy Alliance secured a media placement on the front cover of Dairy Herd Management highlighting the innovative partnership between **Cowherd Dairy and Four Roses Distillery in Kentucky**. The feature explored how distillery byproducts from the whiskey-making process are responsibly upcycled into dairy cow feed, transforming potential waste into a valuable nutritional resource while supporting farm efficiency and environmental sustainability. The story also emphasized dairy farmers as natural recyclers and showcased how collaboration between the dairy and bourbon industries helps preserve agricultural traditions while advancing modern sustainability goals. Although the article originally ran last year, it continues to gain traction and is being picked up by additional trade publications, extending its reach and reinforcing positive perceptions of progressive, resource-conscious dairy farming.

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](mailto:ecarpenter@thedairyalliance.com).



## Genomic Testing Through the Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative

The Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative (SDBII) is calling for dairy cattle producers in Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina to enroll in a genomic testing program through the Kentucky Dairy Development Council. Eligible producers may sign up for this program during the enrollment window which closes on April 30, 2026. By participating in the program, 75% of test costs will be reimbursed by SDBII. Producers testing through Zoetis may be eligible for an additional rebate on testing to allow for increased savings. Data from tests included in this program may be used anonymously in an extension publication to demonstrate the benefits of genomic testing in dairy herds.

Findings from genomic testing can assist in on-farm decision making, including:

- Culling decisions.
- Breeding decisions such as sire selection or the use of sexed semen.
- Opportunities for technology usage such as embryo transfer.

Producers interested in participating in this program are invited to attend informational sessions and training opportunities hosted by the Kentucky Dairy Development Council, the University of Tennessee, and North Carolina State University in their respective states. Sessions will include information on how to select animals for testing, how to collect samples, how to use the data, and more.

For more information contact:  
 Kentucky Dairy Development Council  
 Tori Embry: 859-516-1129 - [tembry@kydairy.org](mailto:tembry@kydairy.org)  
 Melissa Huggett: 859-516-2458 - [mhuggett@kydairy.org](mailto:mhuggett@kydairy.org)

To enroll in the program, please fill out an enrollment intake form provided by the Kentucky Dairy Development Council.



**KDDC** | Kentucky Dairy Development Council

**Presents:**



Local farms. Good conversations. No formal agenda—flexible, come-and-go visits with lunch between stops if you choose.

Fourth Thursday each month

Stop 1 - 10:00 am

Lunch - 12:00 pm

Stop 2 - 2:00 pm

## Connecting Young Dairy Producers Through Monthly Farm Visits

*Melissa Huggett*

The Young Dairy Producers of Kentucky has been part of KDDC's commitment to the future of the dairy industry for several years. Building on that foundation, KDDC launched a new monthly farm visit series beginning in March to strengthen connections among young dairy producers and support continued learning across the state.

Producers have shared interest in opportunities that bring peers together in practical, on farm settings where experiences can be exchanged and ideas discussed. Across Kentucky, many dairy producers bring valuable insight shaped by everyday work on their farms, and sharing those perspectives creates meaningful learning opportunities for others in the industry.

The Young Dairy Producers of Kentucky monthly farm visit series provides consistent opportunities throughout the year for producers to connect and learn from one another on working dairy farms. Visits are held on the fourth Thursday of each month, with farm visits typically scheduled for 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., adjusted to the time zone of each location. Producers are encouraged to participate as their schedules allow.

The focus of the series is simple—creating a comfortable, peer driven environment where producers can gather, ask questions, and learn from real world experiences. By keeping the visits informal and practical, the series is designed to be approachable and valuable for both participants and hosts.

Producers interested in learning more or receiving updates about the Young Dairy Producers of Kentucky are encouraged to visit [kydairy.org/ydpk.html](http://kydairy.org/ydpk.html) or join the Facebook group Young Dairy Producers of Kentucky. KDDC also welcomes ideas for future visits, farms to feature, or producers interested in hosting as the series continues.

## Perry Alexander

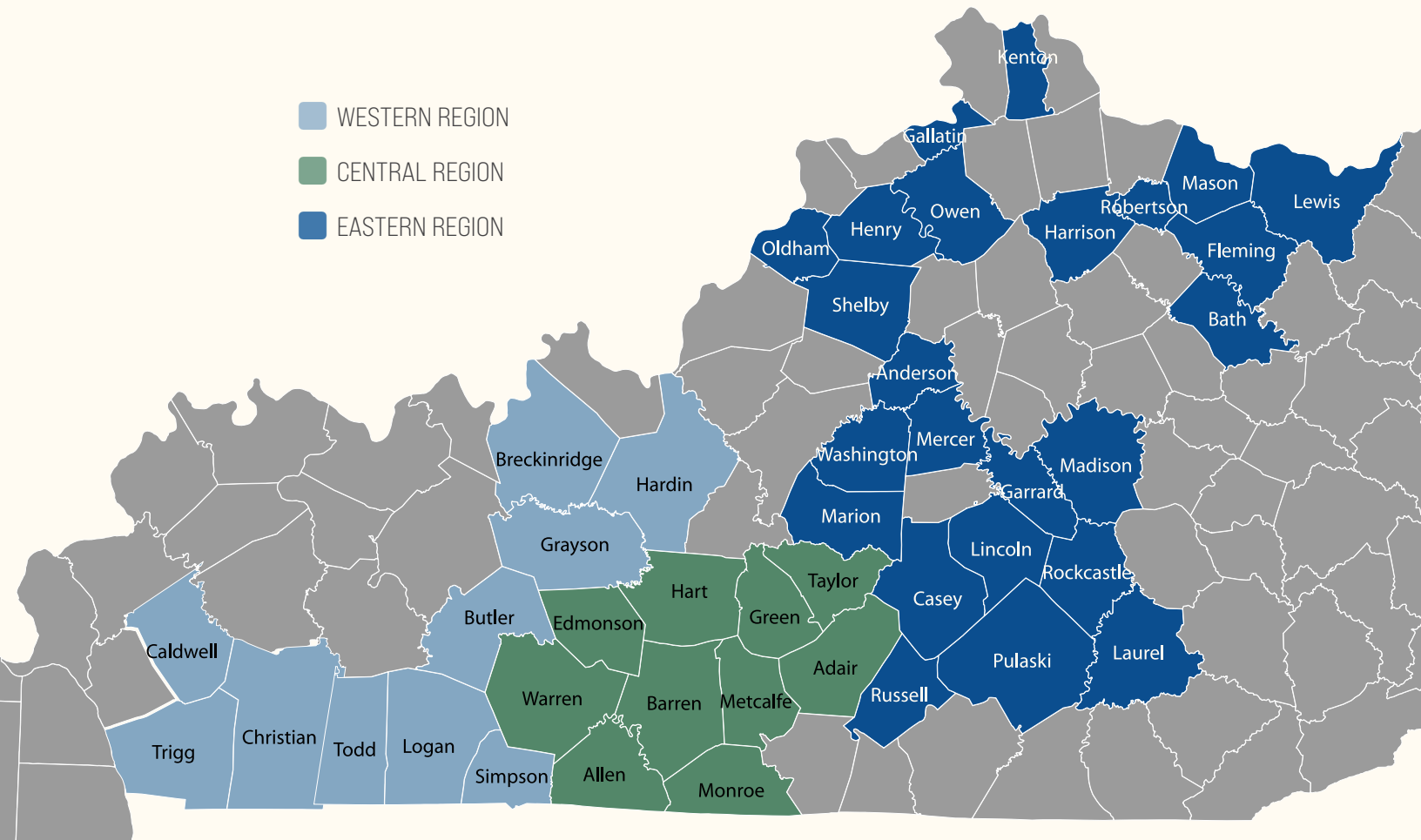
*Western Region Dairy Consultant*  
270-230-6953 • [palexander@kydairy.org](mailto:palexander@kydairy.org)

Perry Alexander knew he wanted to milk cows before he graduated high school. After completing two years of vocational training in auto mechanics, he and a couple of his best friends began building a milk barn on his family farm in the fall of 1977. He was issued a permit to sell raw milk on December 27, 1977, starting with 20 Holstein heifers. Over the next 26 years, that herd grew to 130 milking cows. Before selling the cows, Perry became involved in hauling and managing milk routes for Givens and Houchin Trucking, where he spent approximately five years. On April 1, 2003, he took a position with Dairy Marketing Services as a Field Representative and worked with Dairy Farmers of America for 23 years, retiring on March 1, 2026. Perry has been married to his wife, Freida, for 47 years, and today the family farm operates a 100-cow beef herd run by his son, Joseph, and farm manager, Lucas. Perry now serves as the Western Region Consultant for the Kentucky Dairy Development Council and looks forward to continuing to work directly with dairy producers across the region.

## Lindsie Logsdon

*Central Region Dairy Consultant*  
859-516-1619 • [llogsdon@kydairy.org](mailto:llogsdon@kydairy.org)

Lindsie Logsdon is a Barren County native who grew up on her family's dairy, Kinslow Dairy, where she spent her childhood milking cows, feeding calves, and working tobacco with her grandparents. Her family continues to milk 1,000 cows today, with her husband working alongside her dad while they also manage crops, beef cattle, and sheep. Lindsie's favorite part of farm life is raising her daughter, Gracie, on the same land she grew up on. A 4 H and FFA alum, she earned her Agricultural Economics degree from Western Kentucky University in 2009 and studied abroad in Ecuador and Costa Rica—highlighted by a memorable rainforest trek to see Brown Swiss cattle being milked. With years of experience supporting producers through education, growth opportunities, and financial guidance, Lindsie remains dedicated to serving Kentucky farm families with a positive and practical approach.



# Kentucky Kate

**Kentucky's favorite Holstein cow travels around the state, teaching about the importance of dairy.**

Kate is a life size, fiberglass cow managed by the Kentucky Dairy Development Council. She represents the 42,000 dairy cows in the state and can be "milked" just like a real cow!

Contact KDDC to book her at your school or community event!

[kddc@kydairy.org](mailto:kddc@kydairy.org) 859-516-1129



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<b>APR 3</b>	Kentucky National Shows & Sales <i>Louisville Expo Center</i>
<b>APR 23</b>	Young Dairy Producers of Kentucky Meeting
<b>APR 24-30</b>	SDBII Value Added Experiential Course <i>Oregon</i>
<b>MAY 27</b>	Kentucky State Dairy Judging <i>EKU</i>
<b>MAY 28</b>	Young Dairy Producers of Kentucky Meeting
<b>MAY 30</b>	KDDC Dairy Impact Program Deadline
<b>JUN 5</b>	Edmonton District Dairy Show <i>Metcalfe County</i>
<b>JUN 6</b>	Metcalfe County Dairy Show <i>Metcalfe County</i>
<b>JUN 9</b>	Shelby County Dairy Show <i>Shelby County</i>
<b>JUN 9-11</b>	State FFA Convention <i>Lexington, KY</i>
<b>JUN 12</b>	Murray State Jr Livestock Expo <i>Murray, Ky</i>
<b>JUN 12</b>	June Dairy Night Ballgame (Legends) <i>Lexington, KY</i>
<b>JUN 18-20</b>	Liberty District Dairy Show
<b>JUN 28</b>	Young Dairy Producers of Kentucky Meeting
<b>JUN 26</b>	June Dairy Nights Ballgame (Hot Rods) <i>Bowling Green, Ky</i>

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