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2025

KENTUCKY MILK MATTERS

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See results from the Kentucky State Fair Dairy Show
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Kentucky Milk Matters produced by Carey Brown

President's Corner

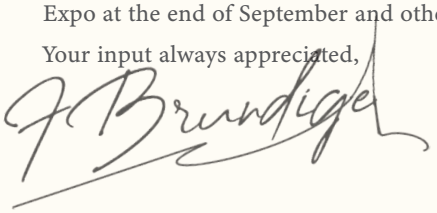
Freeman Brundige

I just returned from the 2025 Kentucky State Fair. We purchased our farm in Kentucky in fall of 1978, and I carried my show string to the 1979 state fair. I have only missed two years since then, not counting the covid year. We exhibited cattle there every year but the last three. Since the first one and every year since I have enjoyed seeing old friends and making new ones. The dairy show staff is always a pleasure to work with and where else could you go to get your cows air conditioning in the middle of August.

I would like to congratulate our new staff members at KDDC. Michelle Sidwell, the new eastern region consultant, Jared Patterson, the new central region consultant, and Melissa Huggett the new program coordinator. All of them have hit the ground running and working to be of assistance to all of our members. Call on them for any help you may need from KDDC. We are still taking applications for the western region consultant. Hopefully, we can fill this position soon. Thanks for your patience during our period of short handedness.

We have a great fall planned with the upcoming Fall Tour to World Dairy Expo at the end of September and other upcoming informational meetings.

Your input always appreciated,



Executive Director Comments

Tori Embry

As we wrap up activities from the Kentucky State Fair, it seems to mark the end of summertime for KDDC and we move fully into fall activities- finalizing details for the Fall Tour, going deep into planning for the Kentucky Dairy Conference, and thinking about our calendar for 2027.

If you keep up with our Milk Matters newsletter or chat with any of our KDDC team, you have likely seen that we have made several changes at KDDC this summer. While it seems to have started with a change in leadership here as I moved to the helm, I feel it important to note that I come from a long line of farmers, and it shows- I just don't like change. It's uncomfortable, unexpected, and causes quite a bit more work that doesn't always feel productive at the start. Generally speaking, I prefer to find a good way of doing things and I will not budge from that routine for years to come.

However, shying away from the discomfort of change rarely serves an individual, organization, or operation. We have all seen the destruction of comfortable routines, when the world passes us by and all of a sudden, "change" slams us to the ground and we have to make the tough decision of whether we'll pick up the pieces and rebuild something new- something built for the future- or whether we'll stay on the ground and shout for the world to slow down.

We're seeing so many of these situations in the industry right now. Immigration policies that haven't been changed in nearly 40 years and increased ICE activity. A dozen new processing projects over the last couple of years that will use an estimated 4 billion pounds of milk annually, changing the way milk flows in the US. Increased pressure to include diversified income streams, like beef on dairy which can add $2-3 per CWT of milk and support fluctuations in milk prices. All of these changes will be, or have been, felt within the state and we are working with other groups in the state and nationally to make Kentucky dairy farmers' voices heard and support change that is in the best interest of our dairy communities.

While I have played my part in advocating for some changes within KDDC, like the development of the Dairy Impact Program at the end of 2024, I have also spent some time on the ground shouting about changes that I was not expecting, was not prepared for, and definitely would not have wished for. But thankfully, we have some great advisors on the KDDC Board of Directors and within the industry who have given direction and support to KDDC, and I am confident that we are on a path that is leading us into a bright future.

For example, I'm so proud of the new members of our team and the energy they bring to the mission of KDDC. Michelle Sidwell, Melissa Huggett, and Jared Patterson have all jumped in feet first to serve the industry and bring their talents to the organization. They have made so many connections in just their first few weeks, and I hope you will give them a warm welcome if you haven't had the chance to meet them yet.

Some work we have been doing this summer within the organization is not as visible, but it is being done with the goal of improving efficiencies and finding the best ways to serve Kentucky dairy farmers. So, hang with us, look for these changes, and as always let us know what you think of the work, we're doing to serve the dairy industry!

Dairy Cattle Markets: Where We've Been and Where We're Going

Jared Patterson

When looking at the dairy cattle prices throughout the state of Kentucky, we have seen how these industry prices have fluctuated over the last few years. It has become challenging for many producers throughout the state to be able to purchase an affordable replacement cow/heifer for their herd. With these prices being so high, it has forced producers to make difficult decisions on how to maintain their milking averages. In this article, we will explore possible causes for this predicament and how there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Replacement heifer prices, as of now, are quite strong in Kentucky. These prices are driven by several factors, some being for maintaining average milk production in operations or to improve overall herd genetics. On average, high quality replacement heifers are typically sold between $2500-$3700 per head. This of course does depend on breed, genetics, and how well the heifers have been raised. Now some would say, why not just raise the replacement heifers yourself? Well, that is much easier said than done. When doing it yourself, many producers are adding on the extra feed cost, management practices, and health risk for a group of heifers that may not pan out to be good replacements in the future. Therefore, producers will often go for the simpler option, which is purchasing replacement heifers from the market. The demand for these replacement heifers is consistent as producers look to improve their overall sustainability, productivity, and profitability of their operations.

Beef on Dairy has become a growing program that many producers have utilized on their operations throughout the state. This is for a good reason as well, since the demand for beef in the state and country has and will continue to grow. On average, a week-old beef on dairy calf can bring up to $800-$1300 per head. Of course, this does depend on breed and genetics of the animal. It is obvious why producers are moving towards this program. When doing this, you are getting a return on investment, while also decreasing the amount of feed cost, management practices, and health risk associated with going the traditional route of raising a group of these calves up to 600-800 pounds and then selling them to market.

The question becomes simple; do you do beef on dairy and later pay a high price for what seems like a good replacement heifer, or do you raise your own replacement herd and miss out on the incredible opportunity of a beef on dairy program? Well, as the current market is situated, a combination of both options may make the most economic sense. Although dairy heifer prices have stabilized over the past few months, they remain high and finding heifers to purchase is still difficult. Producers may need to consider breeding their best cows to make replacement heifers while breeding the rest of the herd to beef to capture the beef on dairy market.

KDDC is supported in part by a grant from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund

2025 Kentucky State Fair

The **121st Kentucky State Fair** has come and gone. Congratulations to these Kentucky champion members!

Open Ayrshire Show:

Premier Exhibitor: **Jesse & Kiley Muse** Barren County

KY Junior & Junior Champion: **Colt Buckley** Anderson County

KY Reserve Junior & Junior Champion: **JG Springs Dairy Goode** Casey County

KY Intermediate Champion: **JSB Acres** Hart County

KY Reserve Intermediate Champion: **Jeremy Kinslow** Warren County

KY Senior Champion: **Elmore & Muse & Gibson** Henry County

KY Reserve Senior Champion: **Christy Dailey** Clark County

KY Grand Champion: **Jesse & Kiley Muse** Barren County

KY Reserve Grand Champion: **Elmore & Muse & Gibson** Henry County

Open Brown Swiss Show:

Premier Breeder & Exhibitor: **Sparrow Family** Carroll County

KY Junior & Junior Champion: **Luke Buckley** Anderson County

KY Reserve Junior and Junior Champion: **Luke Buckley** Anderson County

KY Intermediate Champion: **Sparrow Family & Chad Volker** Carroll County

KY Reserve Intermediate Champion: **Ridgeline Genetics** Metcalfe County

KY Senior Champion: **Sparrow Family** Carroll County

KY Reserve Senior Champion: **Jesse & Kiley Muse** Barren County

KY Grand Champion: **Sparrow Family & Chad Volker** Carroll County

KY Reserve Grand Champion: **Ridgeline Genetics** Metcalfe County

Open Guernsey Show:

Premier Breeder & Exhibitor: **Style Cres** Metcalfe County

KY Junior & Junior Champion: **Luke Buckley** Anderson County

KY Reserve Junior & Junior Champion: **Lucas Hayes** Rockcastle County

KY Intermediate Champion: **Leah Jenksins** Mercer County

KY Reserve Intermediate Champion: **Jesse & Kiley Muse** Barren County

KY Senior Champion: **Oesterritter & Gibson** Henry County

KY Reserve Senior Champion: **Knapp Genetics** Barren County

KY Grand Champion: **Leah Jenksins** Mercer County

KY Reserve Grand Champion: **Oesterritter & Gibson** Henry County

Open Holstein Show:

Premier Breeder: **JG Springs Dairy Goode** Casey County

KY Junior Champion: **Colt Buckley** Anderson County

KY Reserve Junior Champion: **Luke Buckley** Anderson County

KY Intermediate Champion: **Lizzy Turner** Mercer County

KY Reserve Intermediate Champion: **Hudson Spoonamore** Lincoln County

KY Senior Champion: **Dakota Hardin** Shelby County

KY Reserve Senior Champion: **Lilly Phillips** Shelby County

KY Grand Champion: **Dakota Hardin** Shelby County

KY Reserve Grand Champion: **Lizzy Turner** Mercer County

KDDC is supported in part by a grant from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund

Open Jersey Show:

Premier Breeder & Exhibitor: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

KY Junior Champion: **KC Farms** Russel County

KY Reserve Junior Champion: **Hudson Spoonamore** Lincoln County

Open Junior Champion: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

KY Intermediate Champion: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

KY Reserve Intermediate & Intermediate Champion: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

KY Senior & Senior Champion: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

KY Reserve Senior Champion: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

KY Grand & Grand Champion: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

KY Reserve Grand Champion: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

Open Milking Shorthorn Show:

Premier Breeder: **Gibson & Elmore & Stump** Henry County

KY Junior & Junior Champion: **Taylor Graves** Boyle County

KY Reserve Junior & Junior Champion: **Jeremy Kinslow** Warren County

KY Intermediate & Intermediate Champion: **Payton Towe** Allen County

KY Reserve Intermediate & Intermediate Champion: **Jeremy Kinslow** Warren County

KY Senior Champion: **Payton Towe** Allen County

KY Reserve Senior & Senior Champion: **Payton Towe** Allen County

KY Grand & Grand Champion: **Payton Towe** Allen County

KY Reserve Grand & Grand Champion: **Jeremy Kinslow** Warren County

Open Red & White Show:

Premier Exhibitor: **JG Springs Dairy Goode** Casey County

KY Junior & Junior Champion: **Rylan Pike** Hart County

KY Reserve Junior & Junior Champion: **Rylan Pike** Hart County

KY Intermediate Champion: **Lindsie Logsdon** Barren County

KY Reserve Intermediate Champion: **JG Springs Dairy Goode** Casey County

Reserve Intermediate Champion: **Lindsie Logsdon** Barren County

KY Senior & Senior Champion: **JG Springs Dairy Goode** Casey County

KY Reserve Senior Champion: **Joe Bratcher** Lincoln County

KY Grand & Grand Champion: **JG Springs Dairy Goode** Casey County

KY Reserve Grand Champion: **Lindsie Logsdon** Barren County

Open Supreme Champion:

The Supreme Champion Cow: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

The Supreme Champion Heifer: **Keightley & Core** Mercer County

Reserve Supreme Champion Heifer: **Luke Buckley** Anderson County

KDDC is supported in part by a grant from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund


SUPREME CHAMPION DAIRY COW KENTUCKY STATE FAIR 2025

Smart Cows, Smarter Farms: WKU's Dairy Tech Roundup

Melissa Huggett

We headed to Western Kentucky University's Smart Holstein Lab Showcase on July 29th—and let me tell you, the cows there are living in the future.

In the milking parlor, Labby inline meters tracked milk fat, protein, yield, flow, and somatic cell count—basically everything but the cow's favorite radio station. These gadgets help farmers spot problems early and keep milk quality top-notch. With just 53 milking cows, the farm still churns out 475 gallons of milk per day, averaging 79 lbs. per cow.

Also in the parlor, Cattle Care Technology kept an eye on the humans. This system monitors employee performance—tracking phone usage, milking procedures, cleaning routines, and even signs of animal mistreatment. It's like having a barn manager that never blinks. If someone's cutting corners, the system knows—and that means better care for cows and cleaner milk for everyone.

Just outside the parlor exit, we saw the first unveiling of the Build a Better Cow Technology by the Holstein Association USA. This system measures 26 conformation traits, including linear traits, locomotion, and body condition score (BCS). It's the brainchild of Dr. Jeffrey Bewley, Executive Director of Genetics and Innovation, and the Holstein Association team who've been working on it daily. Think of it as a full-body scan for cows, designed to help build better genetics from the ground up.

In the calf barn, Shelby Felder, WKU's dairy manager, answered questions and shared insights into calf care and barn routines. Her hands-on experience gave visitors a real sense of how tech and tradition work together.

Out in the free stall barn, Jadyn Sanchez, a graduate student, highlighted wearable and working technologies like Allflex collars and CowManager ear sensors that monitor movement, rumination, and temperature. These tools are like having a personal trainer, nurse, and nutritionist for each cow—without the gym membership. With cows spending 10.5 hours lying down, 5.9 hours eating, and 8.5 hours ruminating, these trackers make sure every minute counts.

Other "cow Fitbits" included the Afimilk Silent Herdsman and GEA CowScout, which keep tabs on heat cycles, eating habits, and lounging time. The BouMatic RTAS system even uses pedometers to track steps—because yes, cows have step goals too.

We spotted the Opti Duo Robotic Feed Refresher cruising the alleyways like a Roomba with a mission—keeping feed fresh and appetites strong. Nearby, the Swinging Cow Brush gave cows their spa moment, proving that comfort equals production.

And let's talk about the AI Bird Repeller by iChase. This thing means business. Birds tried to sneak in, but one flash of the green laser and they were back on the rafters, rethinking their life choices. It's like sci-fi meets biosecurity.

In the data department, Jenna Guinn, Holstein Association USA's Dairy Analytics and Research Scientist, explained how she retrieves and compiles massive amounts of herd data into usable insights for ongoing research and development. With stats like SCC at 124,000, fat at 4.1%, and protein at 3.3%, it's clear that data is driving better milk and better management.

We also heard from three young ladies in the Block and Bridle Club, who shared their gratitude for the opportunity to show dairy cattle through the WKU Dairy program. Their enthusiasm was a reminder that the next generation of dairy leaders is already stepping up.

To wrap up the day, a panel of producers shared their real-world experiences with similar technologies—discussing what's worked, what's been frustrating, and how hands-on trials have shaped their operations. It was a candid, practical look at tech from the farmer's perspective.

And let's not forget the stars of the herd: the highest-yielding cow clocked in at 144 lbs. of milk in a single day, while the highest-scored cow earned a VG 88. The top GTPI animal hit a whopping 3258—proof that smart breeding and smart tech go hand in hoof.

Bottom line: Whether you're running a large operation or a family farm, this tech is built to fit. It's not about replacing farmers, it's about giving them superpowers.

One Big Beautiful Bill Act: Final Agricultural Provisions

AFBF Economists Daniel Munch, Samantha Ayoub, Faith Parum

After months of negotiation and debate, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBB) (H.R.1) was signed into law by President Trump on July 4. The resulting sweeping legislative package preserves Farm Bureau-supported provisions, strengthens the farm safety net and offers longer-term certainty for farmers and ranchers navigating rising input costs, volatile markets and weather uncertainty.

Building on our coverage of the original House-passed and Senate-passed versions, this Market Intel consolidates the agriculture-related provisions of the final bill into a single comprehensive reference for how the final package supports America's farmers and ranchers.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the final version of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act is projected to increase agriculture-focused spending by approximately $65.6 billion over the next decade (fiscal year 2025–fiscal year 2034). Of that total, $59 billion is directed toward core farm safety net enhancements, including updates to Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), Price Loss Coverage (PLC), Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and crop insurance. Out of the $59 billion, crop insurance accounts for $5.98 billion. The remaining $6.6 billion supports a range of other priorities, including $2.8 billion for disaster assistance programs, $2.2 billion for trade promotion, $1.6 billion each for agricultural research and miscellaneous programs and targeted investments in horticulture, energy and rural infrastructure (Figure 1).

One Big Beautiful Bill Act – Digging into the Details

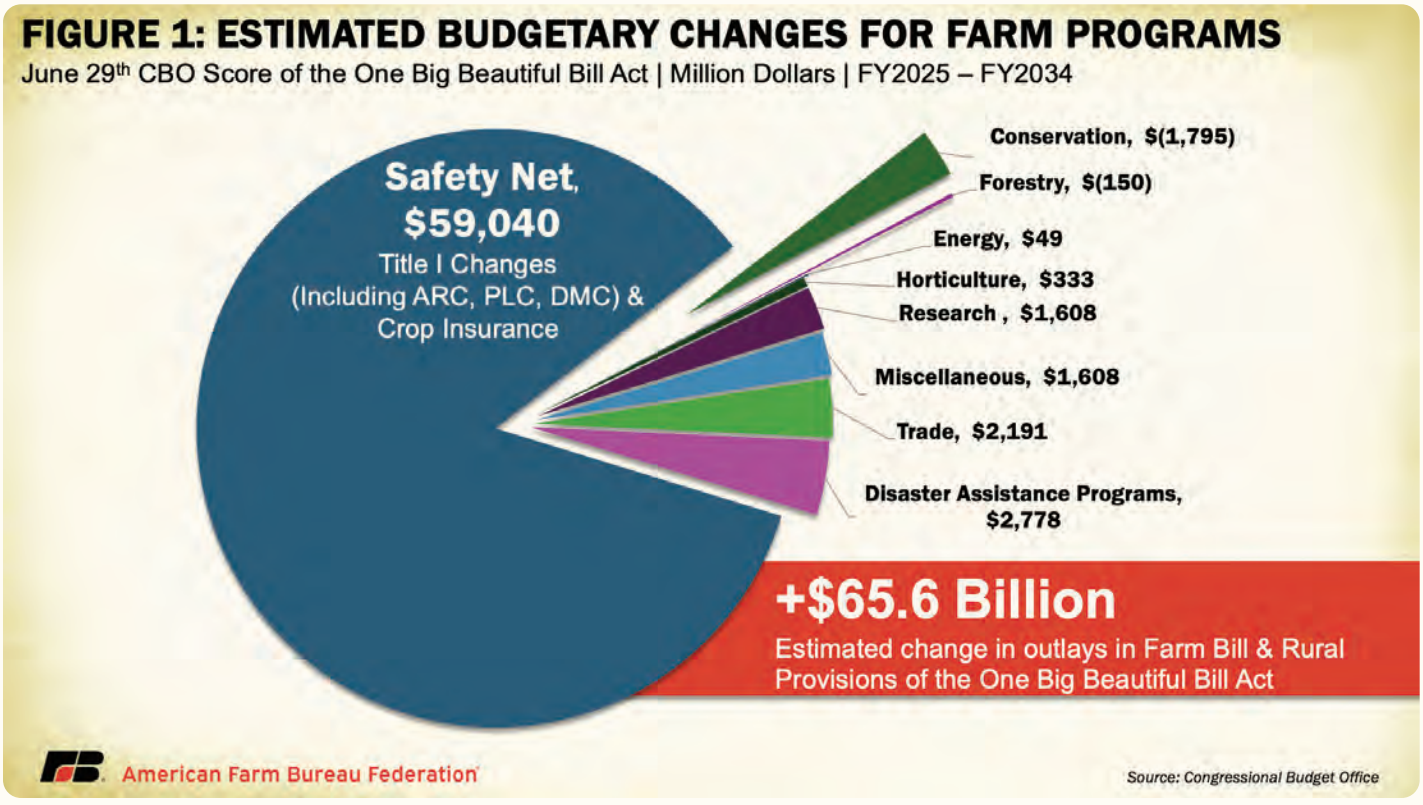
Farm Bill Provisions (Title I): H.R.1 includes a broad reauthorization of the farm bill's nondiscretionary spending provisions, updating and funding many core agriculture titles through 2031. Important provisions include:

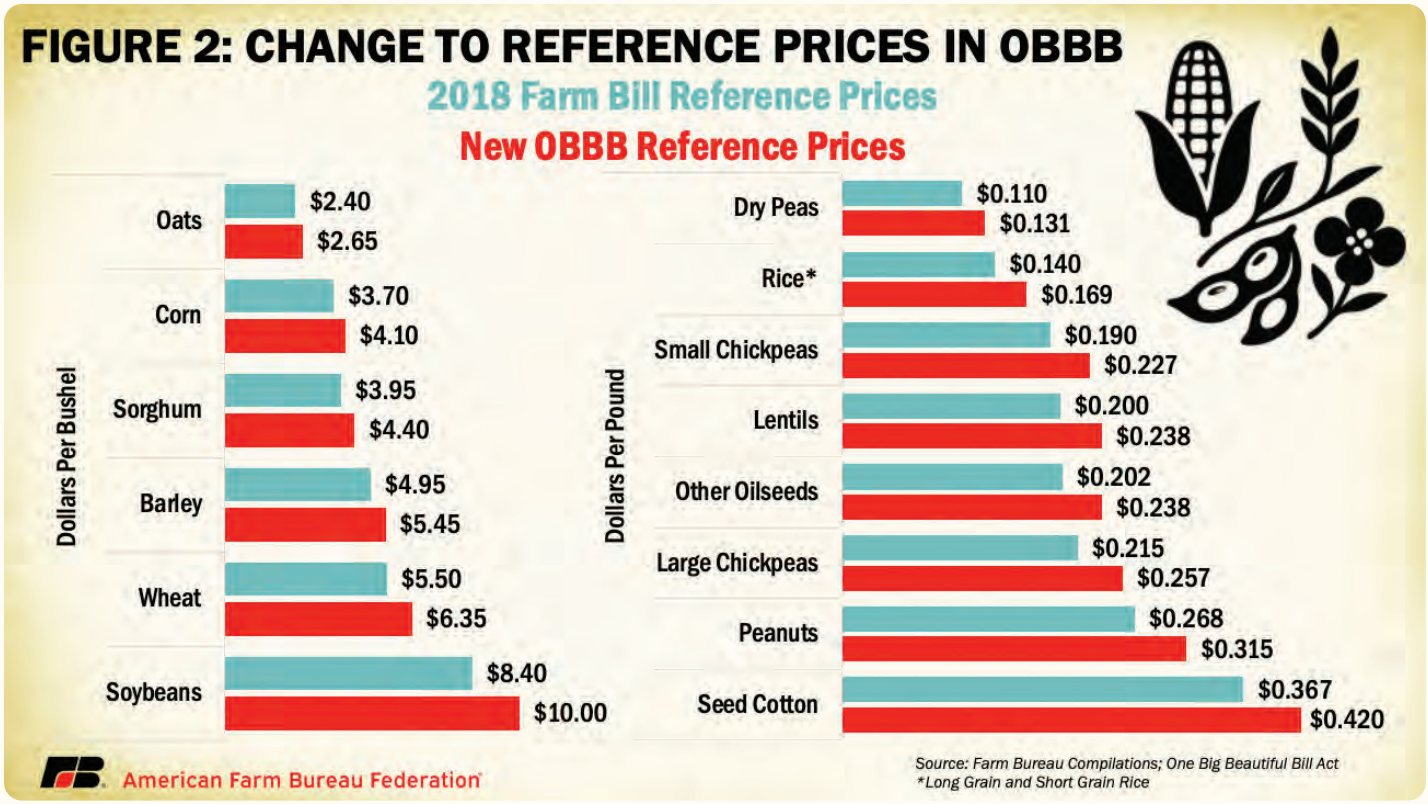
Safety Net Commodity Programs

The final bill extends key commodity support programs – including PLC, ARC, marketing assistance loans and Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) – through the 2031 crop year. The bill raises statutory reference prices (price guarantees) for major covered commodities by 10-21%. Starting in crop year 2031, reference prices will grow by 0.5% annually on a compounded basis, with growth capped at 113% of the original value, reflecting long-term market trends while avoiding unchecked expansion. The effective reference price escalator for PLC was also adjusted from 85% to 88% of the Olympic average (an average that excludes the highest and lowest values from a set of years) of past prices, providing a modest increase in price support as market conditions warrant.

H.R.1 improves the ARC program by increasing the revenue guarantee from 86% to 90% and raising the maximum payment from 10% to 12% of benchmark revenue starting with the 2025 crop year. These changes will help farmers better recover from revenue losses due to price drops or yield declines. Additionally, for the 2025 crop year only, farmers will automatically receive the higher of ARC-CO or PLC payments for each covered commodity— without needing to make an election.

OBBB makes significant updates to base acres — the land tied to farm program





payments.For the first time in over a decade, USDA will allow up to 30 million new base acres to be allocated to farms that have historically produced program crops but don't currently have base acres. Eligibility is based on planting history from 2019–2023. Farmers won't have to give up existing base to qualify, and allocations are proportionally tied to past plantings. These new base acres can make producers eligible for future PLC or ARC payments starting in 2026.

For dairy producers, the bill enhances the DMC program by increasing Tier I coverage eligibility from 5 million to 6 million pounds per farm. Farms can also use the highest production year from 2021 to 2023 as a new enrollment baseline. Those who commit to multiyear DMC coverage receive a 25% discount on premiums, encouraging long-term participation.

H.R.1 extends marketing assistance loan programs through 2031 and sets updated loan rates for major commodities beginning in the 2026 crop year, providing stronger price floors for crops like wheat, corn, cotton and soybeans. The bill also resumes cotton storage payments, enhances repayment flexibility based on world market prices, and ensures refunds for upland cotton producers when repayment prices exceed market lows, helping farmers manage risk and improve cash flow.

The bill modernizes how farm entities are treated under USDA program rules. It ensures that pass-through entities like partnerships, LLCs and S corporations are treated equitably when it comes to payment eligibility and attribution. The annual commodity payment limit is increased from $125,000 to $155,000, with future adjustments tied to inflation. Additionally, farmers who earn at least 75% of their income from farming, ranching or related activities such as agritourism and direct marketing may be exempt from income-based program eligibility limits. These changes recognize the diverse structure of modern farm operations and help ensure that program support reaches actively engaged producers.

Finally, the bill also includes targeted updates for specific commodity sectors. Economic adjustment assistance for domestic textile mills is enhanced by increasing the payment rate for upland cotton used in textile manufacturing from 3 cents to 5 cents per pound starting in 2025. In the sugar program, the loan rate for raw cane sugar is increased to 24 cents per pound for the 2025 through 2031 crop years, with refined beet sugar rates set proportionally higher. Minimum storage payment rates for forfeited sugar are also updated, and USDA is directed to modernize beet sugar allotment rules and improve the timing of quota reallocations.

Additionally, the bill requires a USDA study on potential safeguards for refined sugar imports to protect the domestic sugar industry, with authority to issue new regulations based on the study's findings.

Crop Insurance

Crop insurance remains a cornerstone of the farm safety net, and the bill makes several significant updates to strengthen and modernize the program through 2031. It increases premium support for beginning farmers and ranchers by expanding USDA's definition from five to 10 years of experience, enabling more producers to qualify for assistance over a longer period. Premium assistance is increased during the first four years: an additional 5 percentage points in years one and two, 3 points in year three, and 1 point in year four.These increases are layered on top of the existing 10 percentage point subsidy, resulting in a total subsidy of 15% for the first two years, 13% in year three, 11% in year four, and 10% from year five through year 10.

The bill authorizes a new pilot insurance product for contract poultry growers, helping them manage production risks tied to utility cost volatility and extreme weather — such as spikes in natural gas, propane, electricity or water costs. The program must be developed in collaboration with stakeholders and launched in top poultry-producing states.

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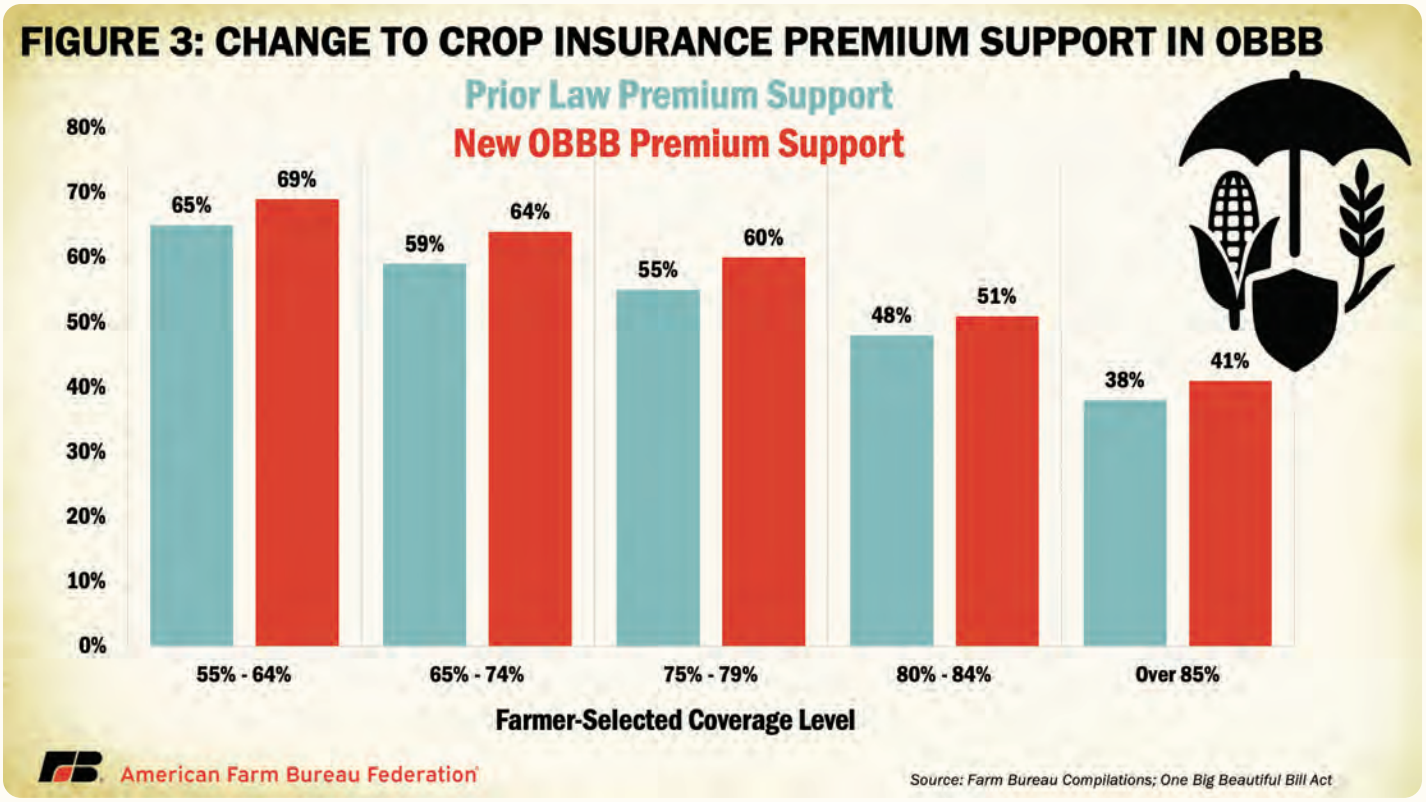


It also expands eligibility for the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO), allowing producers enrolled in ARC to purchase SCO coverage, which was previously only available to those enrolled in PLC. This change offers greater flexibility in tailoring risk management strategies.

To improve affordability and coverage for all producers, the bill increases the government's share of crop insurance premiums by 3 to 5 percentage points across all farmer-selected coverage levels (Figure 3), making higher coverage more affordable. The maximum coverage level for area-based insurance plans is also increased to 95%, and the premium subsidy for those plans is raised from 65% to 80%.

Additionally, funding for compliance and integrity oversight is increased to $10 million per year, and administrative reimbursements are restructured to better reflect the cost of delivering the program in high-risk areas. Together, these updates aim to ensure continued access to affordable, flexible and accountable crop insurance options that help farmers manage both market and weather-related risks.

Conservation Programs

The bill continues long-term funding authority for USDA's major conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) through fiscal year 2031. While these levels exceed those provided under the 2018 farm bill, they primarily reflect the redirection of Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding into the permanent farm bill baseline rather than new program expansions. These updates are reflected in amendments to Section 1241(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985,which establish higher annual funding levels than those provided under the 2018 farm bill.

Although this shift reinforces long-term baseline investments in working lands conservation, the bill does not retain all IRA-funded initiatives. For example, it rescinds $450 million in unobligated IRA funds that had been allocated for competitive forestry grants to non-federal landowners. According to the Congressional Budget Office, these adjustments collectively result in a net reduction of $1.8 billion in conservation spending over the next decade.

The bill also renews smaller initiatives that were not funded in the last farm bill extension.This includes the Grassroots Source Water Protection program, which safeguards well water, and the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive program, which rewards farmers for opening land to hunting and recreation.

In addition, the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program, a vital initiative to combat over $1.6 billion in annual damages caused by invasive wild pigs, is extended with new funding through 2031.

Trade Promotion

An earlier draft of H.R.1 would have increased funding for USDA's core trade promotion programs — including the Market Access Program (MAP), Foreign Market Development (FMD), Emerging Markets Program and Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops through 2031. However, due to jurisdictional constraints in the reconciliation process,the final bill instead establishes a new Agricultural Trade Promotion and Facilitation Program that mirrors the purpose of MAP and FMD. Starting in fiscal year 2027, this new program provides $285 million in permanent mandatory funding each year, significantly enhancing USDA's ability to support international market development. Because existing MAP and FMD authorities remain unchanged at $200 million and $34.5 million, respectively (subject to annual appropriations), this new program represents an increase in trade promotion funding capacity — particularly through a stable baseline mechanism.

Research and Innovation

H.R.1 maintains support for key USDA research initiatives and provides targeted funding to advance agricultural innovation. The bill increases funding for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative to $175 million in fiscal year 2026 — more than doubling current levels — to enhance research on pest control, crop breeding and mechanization for high-value crops. It also invests $60 million in scholarship support forstudents at 1890 land-grant universities, which serve historically Black institutions with agricultural programs. To modernize aging research infrastructure, the bill provides $125 million in mandatory annual funding starting in 2026 for competitive grants under the Research Facilities Act. The legislation also extends funding through 2031 for USDA's Urban, Indoor, and Emerging Agriculture Initiative, provides $8 million to support assistive technology for farmers with disabilities, and allocates $37 million to the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research to promote public-private innovation partnerships. These investments aim to strengthen the nation's agricultural research capacity through improved facilities, expanded access and science-based approaches to production challenges.

Rural Development, Forestry and Schools

While H.R.1 contains forestry and rural development provisions, it does not include a reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program. This omission reflects the Senate's decision to handle SRS separately through the Secure Rural Schools Authorization Act of 2025, which passed the Senate chamber in June. A companion bill has been introduced in the House, but it has not yet advanced. Continued funding for SRS remains critical for counties with large areas of federally owned forestland, particularly in the West, where local tax bases are constrained.

Energy Programs

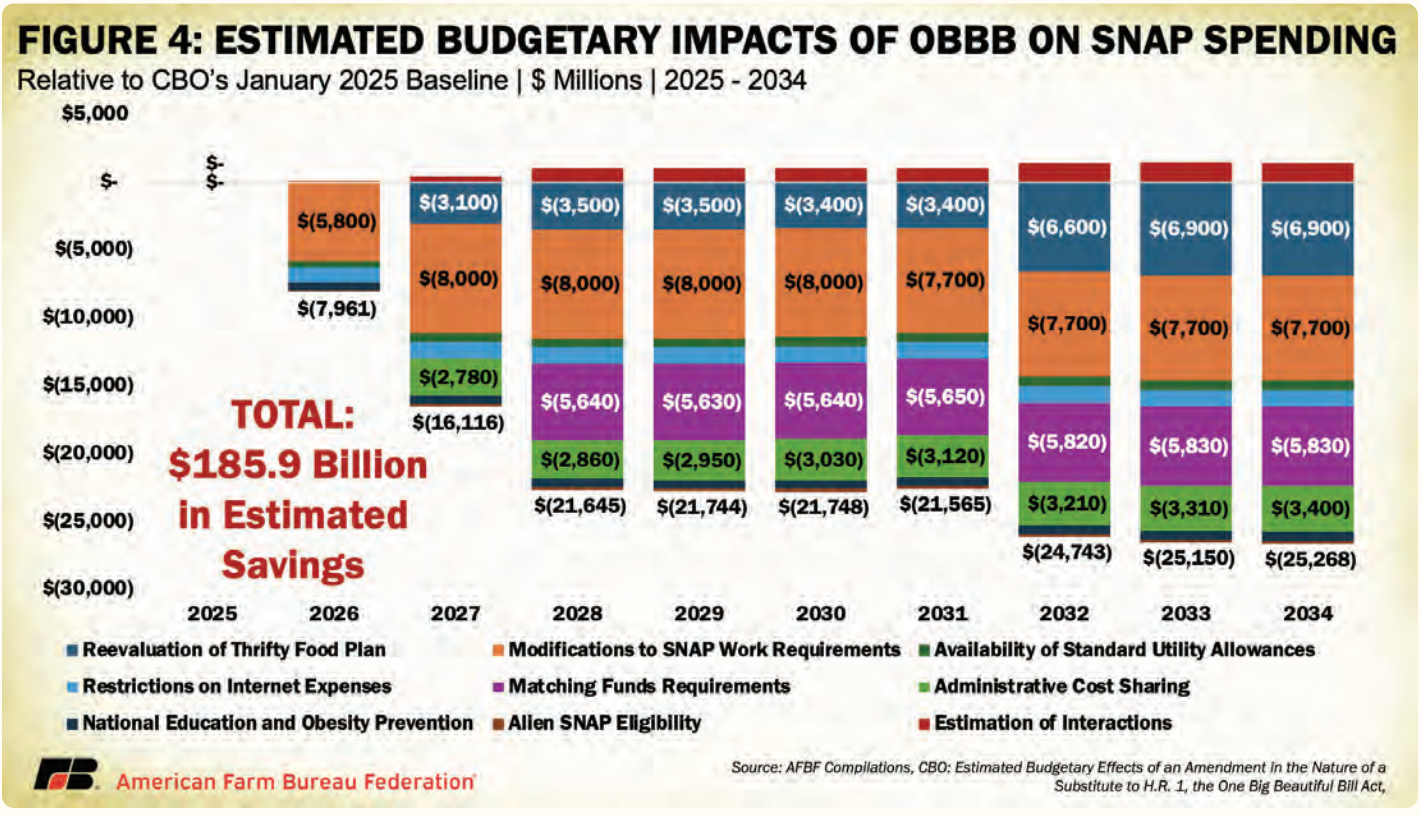
The final bill includes a limited extension of USDA's farm energy programming. Specifically,it reauthorizes the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels through 2031, which provides payments to producers of renewable fuels like biodiesel, cellulosic ethanol and other next-generation biofuels. While the House-passed bill also proposed extending the Biobased Markets Program (BioPreferred), which promotes biobased (plant-derived) products through federal procurement and labeling, that provision was not included in the final legislation.

Specialty Crops, Horticulture and Organics

The final bill delivers tailored support for specialty crop producers (fruit, vegetable, nut and nursery crop farmers) and the organic sector. It increases funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, providing $85 million annually through 2025 and $100 million in 2026. It also boosts the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program from $75 million to $90 million in 2026 to help growers combat invasive threats like citrus greening and the spotted lanternfly. For organic agriculture, the bill reauthorizes organic market data collection with $10 million through 2031, provides $5 million in 2026 to modernize systems for tracking organic imports, extends cost-share assistance for organic certification through 2031 and includes $5 million for USDA's pesticide use survey in 2026.

Disaster Assistance

Section 10401 of the final bill makes several key updates to USDA's Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance programs, improving both payment levels and eligibility criteria across a range of livestock and specialty operations. For livestock producers, the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) is revised to provide 100% of market value for animals lost to predation and 75% compensation for animals lost to adverse weather or disease. The Agriculture Secretary is also authorized to account for regionally documented price premiums above national averages when determining livestock value,offering more equitable



support for producers in higher-value markets. Additionally, the bill creates a new payment mechanism for unborn livestock losses occurring after Jan. 1,2024. These payments, triggered when losses exceed normal mortality, are tied to species-specific multipliers and set at no more than 85% of the payment rate for the lightest weight class of the animal.

The Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) is also expanded to improve access and payment levels. Instead of requiring eight consecutive weeks of qualifying drought, the revised program provides one month of assistance after just four consecutive weeks of qualifying conditions and allows for a second month if drought extends to seven of the previous eight weeks.

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP) program is amended to include payments for farm-raised fish losses due to bird depredation, with a minimum payment rate of $600 per acre and consideration for revenue loss, deterrent costs and disease-related mortality. The bill also directs USDA touse a standardized 15% normal mortality rate when determining eligibility for honeybee colony loss payments.

Finally, the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) is strengthened by eliminating outdated references to adjusted mortality thresholds. The cost-share rate for tree replacement is increased from 50 to 65%, and losses are now evaluated based on normal damage or mortality without reductions for presumed baseline losses. Collectively, these updates provide more accurate and timely assistance for agricultural producers facing production losses from natural disasters, animal predation and disease pressures.

Miscellaneous and Livestock Provisions

H.R.1 addresses a grab-bag of important programs that don't neatly fit into a farm bill title but matter on the ground. A major highlight is animal agriculture health: the bill injects significant new funding into the three-pronged National Animal Disease Preparedness, Detection and Vaccine Bank programs.Starting in 2026, USDA must spend $233 million per year on animal disease prevention and response, a seven-fold increase over previous levels. This means more resources to stockpile vaccines, bolster veterinary diagnostics and train state responders – a timely investment to protect livestock farmers from devastating outbreaks. This increases resources to counter significant threats like foot-and-mouth disease, highly pathogenic avian influenza and screwworm. As poultry producers in multiple states have learned the hard way, an outbreak of avian influenza can decimate flocks overnight. Similarly, a singlecase of foot-and-mouth disease in U.S. livestock could halt billions in exports. Starting in 2031, annual funding continues at $75 million, with a focus on sustaining preparedness infrastructure.

The bill also directs USDA to conduct a mandatory biennial cost survey of dairy processors to assess the actual manufacturing costs of converting raw milk into cheese, butter andnonfat dry milk — products used to set Class III and IV milk prices under the Federal Milk Marketing Orders. Developed with direct input from Farm Bureau, this provision ensures that future make allowance updates are based on consistent, up-to-date data, a long-standing request from dairy farmers seeking fairer and more transparent pricing formulas.

It also expands funding for the Sheep Production and Marketing Grant Program through 2026 to support innovation and marketing efforts in the sheep and lamb industry.

Several previously expired or "orphaned" programs are revived and funded through 2031,including the Pima Cotton Trust Fund and Wool Apparel Manufacturing Trust Fund, which assist U.S. textile manufacturers, as well as the wool research and promotion program. The bill also extends the Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program — focused on combatting huanglongbing (citrus greening) — through 2031, providing researchers with sustained funding to develop long-term solutions to protect citrus groves in Florida and other key growing regions.

Nutrition Title

Alongside farm programs, H.R.1 also reauthorizes nutrition assistance,chiefly the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), with reforms aimed at balancing continued support for vulnerable families with efforts to reduce fraud and program inefficiencies. The bill extends SNAP and related nutrition programs through 2031,while updating work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents, modifying utility allowance rules, and introducing targeted program integrity reforms. Continued funding is also provided for food banks through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

According to the Congressional Budget Office, these changes result in an estimated $186 billion in SNAP-related savings over the next decade. As illustrated in Figure 4, the bulk of these savings stem from adjustments to the Thrifty Food Plan reevaluation, work requirement modifications, utility allowance limits and administrative cost-sharing reforms.These savings played a central role in offsetting increased farm program outlays, enabling Congress to reinvest in the farm safety net, rural development and agricultural infrastructure without increasing total agricultural spending under the bill.

Even with $186 billion in projected savings, SNAP remains the largest USDA program,making up 72% of expected total spending over the next decade. As Figure 5 shows,nutrition outlays surged during the pandemic to meet urgent need but even after those temporary spikes, spending is projected to remain well above pre-pandemic levels. This underscores the lasting shift in baseline nutrition costs, despite reforms aimed at curbing growth.

Tax Provisions Benefiting Farmers, Ranchers and Rural Businesses (Title VII): H.R.1 also delivers major tax relief and incentives that can directly impact farm and ranch families.These include:

Permanency of 2017 Individual Tax Code Provisions: Nearly 98% of farms and ranchesoperate as sole proprietorships, partnerships or S corporations and did not benefit fromthe permanent tax relief granted to corporations in 2017. H.R. 1 grants permanency tonumerous tax provisions important to families and farms in Title XI, Part 1, preventing their tax rates from increasing if they had been left to expire at the end of 2025. These provisions include expanded tax brackets with a lower maximum tax rate, increased standard deductions of $15,750 and child tax credits of $2,200 per child and increased thresholds foralternative minimum tax (AMT) liability.

Qualified Business Income Deduction (Section 199A): For pass-through entities, H.R.1 makes permanent the 20% qualified business income deduction introduced in 2017. The final bill makes permanent the 20% deduction while also providing a minimum deduction of $400 for any business with $1,000 or more in qualified business income. This lowers the share of farming profits spent on taxes and is a big win for small businesses nationwide that compete alongside corporations with lower tax rates.

Estate Tax Relief for Family Farms:

H.R.1 makes the estate tax exemption permanent at $15 million per individual (or $30 million per couple), indexed for inflation. Without this change, the exemption was set to drop back to $5.5 million after 2025, a level that's wildly out of step with today's farm economy. With skyrocketing land values, equipment costs and input prices, even modest-sized farms can easily exceed that threshold, meaning upon the owner's death, far more family operations would face massive tax bills than previously estimated.

By locking in a higher, inflation-adjusted exemption, the bill helps ensure more family farms can transition smoothly to the next generation without being forced to sell off land or assets to pay the IRS.

Enhanced Business Expensing and Depreciation: The act raises Section 179 small business expensing limits to $2.5 million (up from about $1.29 million), with a higher phase-out threshold of $4 million. In addition, H.R. 1 permanently restores full bonus depreciation for capital investments, canceling the remaining phase-down of this expensing benefit. While full bonus depreciation will not retroactively apply to the last two years of phase-down, it will be active for anything purchased in 2025, even if purchased before the enactment of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Practically, these provisions mean farmers can continue to write off the entire cost of new equipment, land improvements like drainage tile, modernized barns and other essential capital upgrades in the year of purchase, rather than depreciating them over many years.

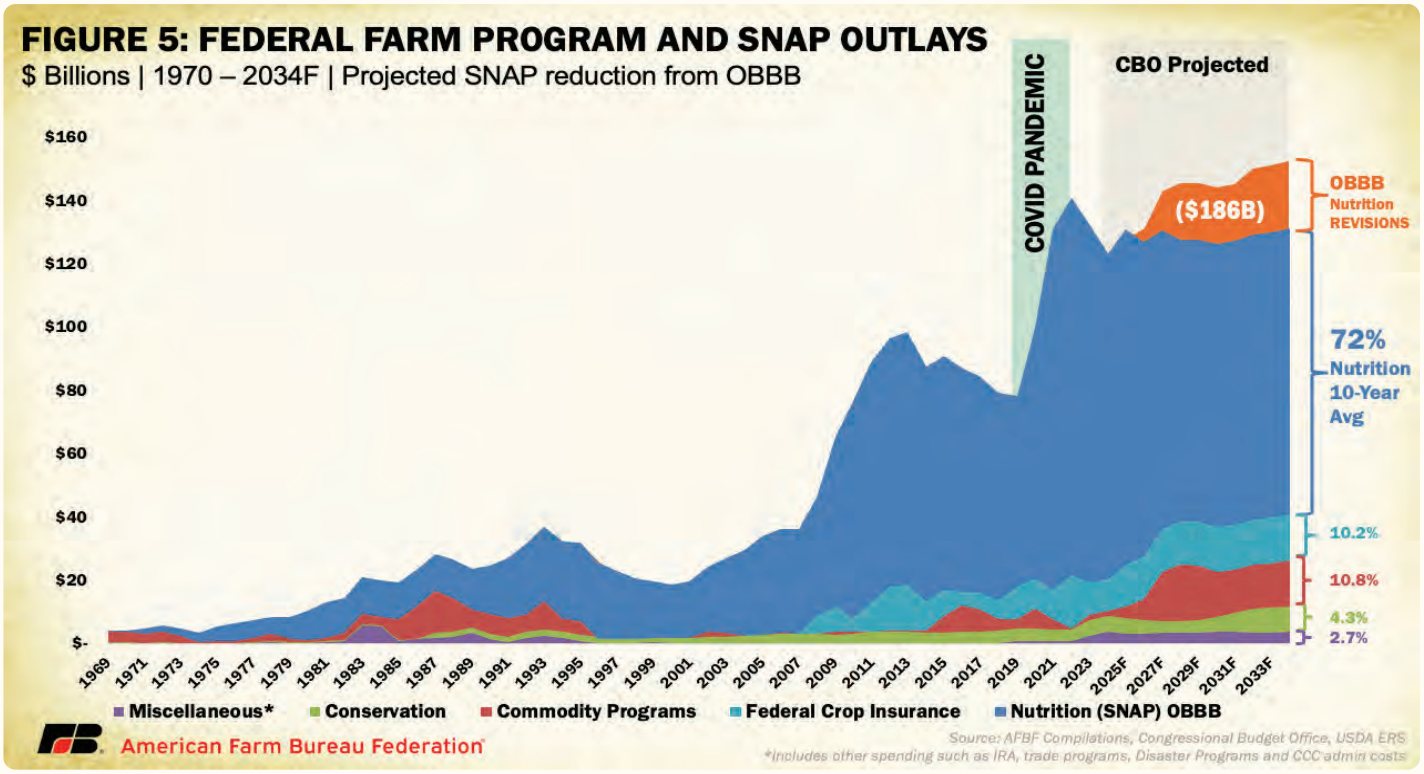
Clean Fuel Production Credit (Section 45Z): H.R.1 delivers a significant win for agriculture-linked, domestic renewable fuels by extending and modifying the Clean Fuel Production Credit (45Z) through 2029. The credit supports the production of low-emission transportation fuels — including ethanol, biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) — by offering a tax credit tied to lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions reductions. To qualify, eligible fuels must be produced by American-controlled firms using feedstocks from the U.S., Mexico or Canada. These changes support a broad range ofagricultural feedstocks such as corn, soybeans and other biomass-based materials, expanding markets for farmers while reducing reliance on fossil fuels. The act alsoamended Sections 45Z and 6426(k) to ensure makers of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) do not receive overlapping tax credits, and increased credits for small biodiesel producers.Combined, the changes to 45Z reinforce domestic and regional production capacity, strengthen supply chain security, and encourage investment in U.S. agriculture and biofuel infrastructure. Extending this credit provides long-term certainty and sends a clear market signal that incentivizes cleaner fuels, agricultural innovation and rural economic development.

One Big Beautiful Bill Act – Conclusion and What's Next

Farmers and ranchers face uncertainty from every direction — markets, weather, input costsand regulation. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act delivers long-overdue policy certainty by strengthening core safety net programs, enhancing risk management tools and locking in important tax provisions for family farms. It reflects many of Farm Bureau's top priorities and offers measurable wins for producers navigating an increasingly complex farmeconomy.

At the same time, H.R.1 is not a complete substitute for a full farm bill reauthorization.Crafted through the reconciliation process, the bill was shaped by budget and jurisdictional limits that excluded several important areas of farm and rural policy.

A follow-up Market Intel will outline what's still left to be done — and where Congress may go next to finish the job for farmers and ranchers.



From Hype to Reality:

Making Dairy Technologies Work on Your Farm

Jeffrey Bewley, PhD Holstein Association USA – Elizabethtown, KY

Every month it seems a new dairy technology enters the market. Each launch is met with hype, often accompanied by flashy headlines about how the newest "Fitbit for cows" will change the industry by detecting sick animals or spotting cows in heat. Some are genuine breakthroughs; others are simply re-packaged or refined versions of tools that have been around for years..

The upside? As an industry we now have two decades of experience with these technologies in both research and commercial settings. We've seen successes, failures, and everything in between. That experience gives us a clearer roadmap for evaluating what truly works on farms like yours.

What is Precision Dairy Monitoring?

Precision dairy monitoring refers to the use of technologies to measure physiological, behavioral, and production variables of individual animals to improve management and performance.

Examples include:

- Wearables with accelerometers applied to the leg, neck, ear, or tail to measure lying time, number of steps, rumination, feeding, and even panting.
- Image-based systems that estimate body condition score or detect lameness.
- Real-time location systems tracking animal movement around the facility.
- Milk-based technologies that analyze biomarkers tied to reproduction and health.

Wearables have proven especially effective for monitoring estrus behavior, and many producers also use them to detect disease.

Ten Questions to Ask Before You Invest

1. How well does the technology actually measure what the manufacturer says it does?

This might seem like a simple question, but not all technologies are created equal. Some are better than others at measuring the variable they are marketed to measure. Just because one technology accurately measures something like rumination or feeding behavior doesn't necessarily mean all of them do. The best technologies have had third-party validations demonstrating how accurate they are at measuring whatever they are reported to measure. Thus, a simple question to ask of technology manufacturers is "can you provide a third-party reference demonstrating how well your technology works?"

2. How well does the system stand up to the harsh conditions of a dairy farm?

A dairy farm is a difficult environment to keep technologies running in. Wet, dirty areas with large, clumsy animals create challenges for wearable and stand-alone technologies. It's not easy to manufacture technologies to survive in these conditions. Rodents and weather conditions can also have a negative impact.

3. How often do the devices fail and need to be replaced?

With all technologies, devices will fail periodically. A good goal should be to have less than 3% of devices fail per year. The best technologies on the market today meet this standard. It is truly amazing how reliable some of these technologies are. On the other hand, other technologies may need to be replaced much more often. This becomes a costly, logistical nightmare for dairy management. Eventually, all devices will reach the end of their useful life. And, at some point, they are technically out of date anyway. Few of us have the same cell phone that we did 5 or 10 years ago. It's not realistic or necessary that devices last forever, but a low failure rate during the first few years should be expected.

4. Which device location fits your farm situation the best?

I have heard compelling, passionate arguments from dairy producers for why leg, neck, ear, tail, or rumen device locations are the best, which usually include reasoning for why the alternative locations won't work. The reality is there are pros and cons to each device location. The key is to decide which device location fits your farm situation the best. What works best for you might not be the same as what works best for your neighbor. Talk to dairy producers using different devices and make the best educated guess for your situation. Remember also that the "location" might be in the form of an image or milk-based technology rather than having devices on or in every animal.

5. Is the information presented in a logical, easy to use format?

Information overload can become a problem quickly with these technologies. Knowing the exact location of every cow in your herd every second of the day is overkill. Having this information summarized to show how much time the cow spends at the feedbunk or in freestalls is likely more useful. But, still, you don't necessarily have time to sort through this information for every cow every day. Rather, this information needs to be summarized to show which cows might be deviating from their normal behavior. Algorithms that help point to the most important information in user-friendly software or phone apps make a huge difference in practical application of these technologies.

6. How well does the data integrate with other information on your dairy?

Precision dairy technologies provide novel, exciting information. However, this information has less value if it cannot be combined with basic cow demographic information like days in milk, lactation number, and pregnancy status. For optimal use, precision dairy technologies need to interface well with your herd management software (i.e. BoviSync, Dairy Comp 305, PCDart). Ideally, they also interface well with other sources of data. Integration of data from multiple sources is both a challenge and an opportunity in this new data era within the dairy industry.

7. Can this information be turned into a meaningful action?

Once we know that the technology is technically accurate, then we need to ask how we will use the information provided to undertake a meaningful action. For example, a large increase in activity telling us that a cow is in heat can be turned into the meaningful action of insemination. Many of the variables measured by these technologies provide us information that can help us treat a sick cow. However, with some information, we might have to ask ourselves "OK. I can measure that but, so what, I can't really do anything meaningful with that information."

8. Does the technology address a real need, problem, or opportunity for your farm situation?

Technology investment decisions are very farm specific. Just because other farms are having success with a particular technology doesn't necessarily mean that it's a good investment for your farm. If you are a producer that does an excellent job managing BCS, maybe an automated BCS system isn't the best investment for your herd. If you have a high pregnancy rate through successful synchronization, maybe an automated estrus detection isn't the best fit for your situation. On the other hand, if those areas are challenges, they may be the right fit for you. It's important to ensure that the technology meets a real need or opportunity for your particular farm situation.

9. What are the false positive and false negative rates for the technology?

If we are using a technology for management by exception, the accuracy of alerts provided by the system is essential. In an ideal world, each technology provides alerts that identify all events of interest without ever providing false alerts. In reality, this isn't easy to achieve. A false negative occurs when an animal has a condition (i.e. estrus or disease) but the system does not provide an alert. A false positive occurs when an alert is provided, but the animal is not experiencing the condition. We want to minimize both false positive and false negative rates. If the false negative rate is too high, we miss the condition we were looking for. If the false positive rate is too high, we end up examining, treating, or breeding animals that don't need action. The right balance of false positives and false negatives depends on the condition, the farm, economics, and personal preference.

10. Will you observe an economic return from investing in the technology?

This is a key question no matter what the milk price is. If we are going to spend money on a technology, we need to understand the economic returns from investing in the system. Improving reproductive efficiency, lowering disease costs, and increasing cow longevity can all help pay for these systems. But, we need to calculate the return on investment for a technology for each herd situation. Some of these systems have a hefty price tag. We just need to make sure we see those expenditures returned.

Final Thoughts

Dairy technologies continue to evolve at a rapid pace, and the opportunities are exciting. But the lesson from years of experience is clear: successful adoption requires realistic expectations and a focus on economics and management fit. By asking the right questions up front, producers can avoid costly missteps and ensure that technology truly strengthens their herds and their bottom line.

Current Status of HPAI in Dairy Cattle in Kentucky

Tori Embry

We have been fortunate this summer to see a decline in number of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) cases across the US after seeing it shake the dairy industry in some western states over the winter. To understand exactly where we've been and where we might be headed with HPAI, KDDC hosted a webinar on August 28th to give updates on the current status of HPAI in dairy cattle in Kentucky.

Joining us were experts from across the state including Dr. Chris Craig of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in Kentucky, Dr. Allison Siu of Kentucky Department of Public Health, Dr. Steve Valasco of the Kentucky State Veterinarian's Office, and Brian McAnelly of the Kentucky Milk Safety Branch. They covered multiple topics ranging from history of HPAI in dairy cattle in the US, human health matters, and current surveillance.

This spring, the Milk Safety Branch conducted statewide milk testing as part of the federally mandated National Milk Testing Strategy in an effort to identify what states were affected by HPAI. After 4 months of sampling bulk tanks on farm, Kentucky was able to gain an "unaffected" status after showing no positive samples. Milk Safety will be maintaining surveillance for HPAI by testing milk silos at plants, especially as we go into the migratory season this fall when diseases spread by migratory fowl, like avian influenza, tend to be identified more frequently. However, Dr. Craig noted that this surveillance is conducted on a similar level to many other diseases like brucellosis or tuberculosis, not with the expectation that number of cases will increase, but as a matter of monitoring public health.

Surveillance is also being conducted on other populations. On the human health side, tests positive for flu A are being subtyped for HPAI. Only 70 human cases have been identified across the US with most cases showing mild flu-like symptoms or conjunctivitis. Since cats are highly susceptible to HPAI, they are also being monitored with any cat brought in for rabies testing and receiving a negative rabies test then being tested also for HPAI. The public is generally at a low risk for HPAI and this surveillance is just an effort to gain a better understanding of and monitor for this disease.

While only time will tell exactly how the migratory season will impact the pattern of HPAI in the US, there are some basics to be aware of to identify it on your farm. Cows affected by HPAI most frequently show decreased milk production and changes in the appearance of milk. Affected cows should be treated like those with a contagious mastitis with quarantine procedures and cleaning of milking equipment between cows. Farm employees exposed to affected cows are also susceptible to HPAI, especially those who are milking with increased likelihood of raw milk in or around the eyes. Proper personal protective equipment (PPE) should be utilized. While PPE typically may just be gloves, employees on a HPAI-affected farm may want to take more extensive measures. Any suspected cases of HPAI in humans should contact their local health department for further information, while the Office of the State Vet can respond to inquiries about animal health.

KDDC is supported in part by a grant from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund

Meet Jared Patterson

KDDC Central Region Dairy Consultant

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Hi, my name is Jared Patterson. From a young age when my family started our dairy operation in 2009, I was introduced to the dairy industry. It was then that I found my calling for all things dairy. After graduating from Eastern Kentucky University with a B.S. in Animal Science and an A.S. in Technical Agriculture, I knew I wanted to continue my career in the dairy industry. With previous experience working on my family's farm and the many opportunities the agriculture department provided in college, like being a part of the Dairy Challenge team, I believe that I can be a useful tool in which dairy producers throughout the state can use. In my free time, I enjoy strategizing my fantasy football team each week during the NFL season, GO BILLS!!!

Meet Melissa Huggett

KDDC Program Coordinator

859-516-2458 | mhuggett@kydairy.org

Hello Kentucky dairy community!

I'm Melissa Huggett, and I'm thrilled to introduce myself as the new Program Coordinator with the Kentucky Dairy Development Council. It's an honor to step into this role and work alongside such a passionate and hardworking group of producers, advocates, and industry partners.

I come to KDDC with a deep appreciation for agriculture and a strong belief in the power of practical, farmer-focused support. My goal is simple: to help Kentucky's dairy farmers thrive by connecting you with the tools, programs, and innovations that make a real difference on the farm. Whether it's navigating new opportunities, sharing success stories, or helping you make the most of KDDC resources, I'm here to listen, learn, and lend a hand.

You'll be hearing from me regularly in this newsletter, where I'll spotlight useful programs, highlight on-farm technology, and share updates that matter to your bottom line. I'm especially excited to bring a fresh perspective to how we communicate—keeping things simple, relevant, and maybe even a little witty now and then.

I look forward to meeting many of you in person at upcoming events, farm visits, and over a good cup of coffee. Until then, feel free to reach out—I'd love to hear what's working for you, what's not, and how KDDC can better serve your operation.

Here's to a strong future for Kentucky dairy!

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: REGISTERED HOLSTEIN BULLS READY TO WORK. Upton, KY. Call Brandon Fields at (270) 218-0928.

LIST AN ITEM: Members of KDDC can contact us to list an item at (859) 516-1129.

Milk Prices

FMMO 5
www.malouisville.com
August 2025
Class 1 Advanced Price
(@3.5% BF)
$24.53

September 2025
Class 1 Advanced Price
(@3.5% BF)
$24.30

FMMO 7
www.fmmatlanta.com
August 2025
Class 1 Advanced Price
(@3.5%)
$24.73

September
Class 1 Advanced Price
(@3.5%)
$24.50

Kentucky Dairy Development Council's

2025 FALL TOUR

September 30 - October 3

SEPT 30

- Depart Elizabethtown, KY location TBD
- Tour Traders Point Creamery, Zionsville, IN
- Arrive in Madison, WI

OCT 1

- Attend the World Dairy Expo in Madison, WI
- Dinner with WDE Exhibitors
- Stay in Madison, WI

OCT 2

- Tour Golden Oaks Farm in Wauconda, IL
- Tour Homestead Dairy in Plymouth, IN
- Tour Crystal Springs Creamery in Osceola, IN

OCT 3

- Tour Beer Dairy in Milford, IN
- Tour Kuehnert Dairy Farm in Fort Wayne, IN
- Return to Elizabethtown, KY location TBD

All stops are subject to change due to availability or time allotted

KADF
KENTUCKY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

KDDC
Kentucky Dairy Development Council

NEW WORLD SCREWWORM (NWS)

Cooperative Extension Service

Authored by: **Hannah Tiffin** (Assistant Extension Professor, Medical/Veterinary Entomology, Department of Entomology), **Jessie Lay** (Animal Health Extension Veterinarian), and **Kenny Burdine** (Extension Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics).

WHAT IS IT AND WHY SHOULD PRODUCERS CARE?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

New World screwworm, or NWS for short, can cause serious tissue destruction and lead to disease and death in livestock and other animals. The fly larvae, or maggots, "screw" their way into living animal tissue by tearing through and eating the host's tissue with sharp mouth hooks. This causes extensive tissue damage and can lead to severe secondary infections as the maggots cause deep wounds, leading to sickness and potentially death in untreated animals. The NWS flies are often associated with cattle but can affect sheep, goats, horses, and other livestock and companion animals, as well as wildlife species including infrequent reports on birds, and in rare circumstances can affect humans.

An outbreak in Texas in 1976 infested nearly 1.5 million cattle and over 300,000 sheep and goats before the outbreak was contained. Adjusted for inflation, this could cost Texas producers alone an estimated $732 million in treatment, control, and livestock losses, and the Texas economy overall $1.8 billion. Since NWS eradication, most outbreaks in the United States have been limited to Texas and other southwestern states, with one notable exception affecting Key deer in the Florida Keys in 2016 and contained in 2017.

Today, these flies are found in several South American and Caribbean countries. However, they used to have a wider range that included Mexico and extended to the southern United States, including Kentucky. Fortunately, NWS was eradicated from the United States, and the United States was considered NWS-free in 1966. To reduce risk of reintroduction of these pests from Mexico and Central America, the United States partnered with Mexico and Central American countries to continue eradication programs and push this pest southward, with a permanent barrier zone established in Panama in 2006. In collaboration with Panamanian authorities, this barrier zone releases sterilized male flies that mate with females and prevent the females from producing new flies, reducing the overall NWS fly burden and limiting northward expansion of this pest from the barrier zone.

WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM NOW?

For a variety of reasons, NWS was able to move northward from the Panama barrier zone and made its way through Central America into Mexico, risking re-introduction to the United States from the movement of infested animals through the livestock trade (legal and illegal), travel, and border crossings of stray livestock, equids, and wildlife from affected regions.

There has always been a risk of re-introduction of NWS since the southern United States has the right environment for this pest given its historic range throughout the South. Live cattle trade and this pest's resilience highlight the importance of vigilance and international and intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration. While there have been several outbreaks of NWS in the United States, all outbreaks were able to be contained through coordinated efforts by the USDA and other inter-agency and international partners.

NWS has been confirmed in cattle north of the Panama barrier zone, including in southern Mexico. There have not been confirmed reports in the United States but with NWS moving northward, it is imperative that producers continue to follow USDA regulations for live bison, cattle, and equine imports and stay vigilant for this pest, particularly in border states such as Texas. Sterile male NWS flies are being released in these outbreak locations to reduce the number of flies and to re-establish barrier zones in outbreak locations, with the goal of pushing NWS southward to the well-established Panama barrier zone.

HOW DOES NWS AFFECT ANIMAL HEALTH?

While maggot (fly larvae) infestation is not uncommon, the New World screwworm causes much more harm than species that typically affect U.S. livestock. Most species of maggots found in the United States infest infected wounds and feed on necrotic (dead) tissue at the skin's surface. Instead of staying at the tissues' surface to feed, NWS maggots burrow deeper into wounds to feed on healthy tissue. This is extremely painful to affected animals and causes severe lesions

FAST FACTS:

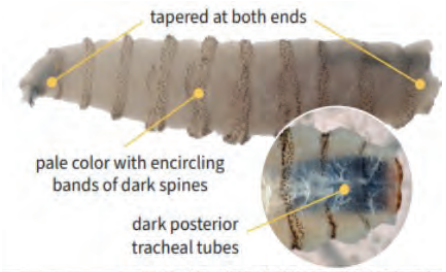
NWS is a fly species with maggots that burrow deep into animal tissue and cause extensive tissue damage, leading to secondary infections and even death. This results in high economic costs due to animal loss and treatment, as well as pest containment and control efforts.

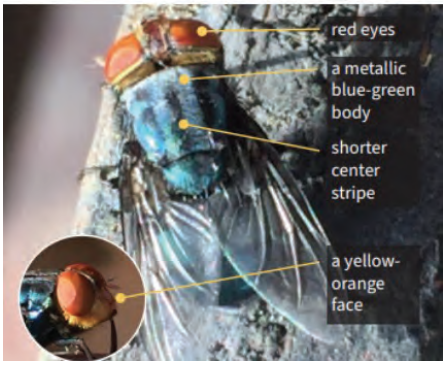
The United States has been considered NWS-free since 1966, with a few notable outbreaks.

The current outbreak is north of the Panama barrier zone, with outbreaks detected in Mexico.

NWS has not been detected in the United States during the current outbreak.

It is critical to understand and follow cattle-import regulations to prevent an outbreak of NWS in the United States, which would be devastating for U.S. cattle health, producers' livelihoods, and consumers' access to beef and other livestock products and byproducts.





KDDC is supported in part by a grant from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund

and extensive tissue damage. The female flies can be attracted to even minor wounds, such as bites from other insects or ticks or the umbilical cord of a newborn calf. Female flies will also deposit eggs in mucous membrane openings such as the nose, eyes, ears, anus, and genitalia. As the maggots continue to feed on deeper tissues, the wounds enlarge and frequently develop secondary infections, which can lead to death of the animal.

If the outbreak spreads to the US, early detection will be essential to prevent potentially devastating losses. Producers should call their veterinarian if they notice maggots deep in wounds, a strong smell of decaying flesh, or wounds that grow rapidly in size and are infested with maggots in companion animals, livestock, or wildlife.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEXICO-U.S. CATTLE TRADE

The ban on live-cattle imports from Mexico has also affected U.S. cattle markets. A significant number of cattle are imported from Mexico to enter the U.S. beef system each year. These tend to be lighter cattle that would be placed in a growing program, such as grazing or backgrounding, before entering a feedyard.

The first ban on live-cattle imports from Mexico occurred in late November of 2024 and decreased the total number of imports from Mexico for several weeks last year. For perspective on volume, 2024 live-cattle imports from Mexico would have likely represented 4-5% of U.S. feedlot placements for the year. Importantly, these imports represent a much larger share of feedlot inventories in the southern United States, including Kentucky.

The initial ban on live-cattle imports from Mexico was lifted in February of 2025. Cattle began to move north again, but at a reduced pace compared to most of 2024. Mexican cattle imports were down by 32% in March of 2025 compared to March of 2024 and were down more than 50% year-to-date. The latest ban was put in place on May 11 and remains in effect at the time of this writing.

Photo of the different life stages of New World screwworm on an infested host (USDA APHIS-25-028, April 2025)

WHAT IMPACT HAS THE BAN HAD ON CATTLE MARKETS?

The reduction in live-cattle imports further reduced an already tight feeder-cattle supply. Both bans resulted in price increases, with CME© feeder-cattle futures prices reaching record highs. In the short term, supplies will continue to tighten while the import ban is in place. Longer-term implications are less clear, as feedlot and packing capacity (especially in the South) are somewhat dependent on Mexican cattle imports. How long the ban lasts and the implications of continued reductions in feeder-cattle supply remain key questions going forward. However, keeping the United States NWS-free is critical for ensuring food security for U.S. consumers and economic stability and longevity for cattle and other livestock producers given the New World screwworm's ability to infest a wide range of animals.

WHAT IS KENTUCKY DOING?

Federal, state, and local officials and specialists are monitoring the situation. An emergency response plan is in place if detected in the United States, with a specific control plan in place if detected in Kentucky.

KENTUCKIANS, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

Follow import/export regulations for all animals including livestock, equines, and domestic pets. Helpful links to USDA regulations are included below.

- **Livestock imports from Mexico:** https://www.aphis.usda.gov/live-animal-import/cattle-bisongermplasm/mexico
- **Live animal imports, any country:** https://www.aphis.usda.gov/live-animal-import
- **Domestic dog import permit requirements:** https://www.aphis.usda.gov/pet-travel/anothercountry-to-us-import/dogs

Stay aware of the situation and changes in import/export regulations.

- **Current NWS outbreak situation: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/cattle/ticks/screwworm/outbreak-central-america**

Know the signs of NWS and where to report if you have a suspected case. Observable signs to report include: Smell of decaying flesh on your animals • Wound(s) or openings (nostrils, genitalia) with maggots on your animal • Animals with irritated behavior and/or head shaking

Report it! If you have a suspected case of NWS on one of your animals or wildlife in your area, contact an accredited veterinarian or one of the agencies below.

KY Department of Agriculture, Office of the State Veterinarian (502) 573-0282
https://www.kyagr.com/statevet/

USDA-APHIS Veterinary Services (in Kentucky) (502) 848-2040

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MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

A Very Dairy Affair

The Kentucky State Fair has come and gone and once again Southland Dairy Farmers was in attendance throughout it. As one of the biggest events of the year, our team shows up in full force to promote the industry and support our farmers on multiple fronts.

- Before the fair begins, Southland Dairy Farmers donates to the annual cheese auction. A cheese basket is then put together and bid on at the event. The money raised from this auction and its sponsors goes toward the Junior Dairy Show. This year enough money was raised to allow every showman to receive a portion.
- Butter and yogurt are provided for the commodities breakfast to help celebrate the industries' diverse products. All left over yogurts and a few cheese sticks were handed out to the dairy showmen.
- Israel and Oliva gave milking demonstrations with our Mobile Dairy Classroom throughout the entirety of the fair.
- At the Gazebo you can find members of the Southland Dairy Farmer team handing out cheese to fair goers. This year 50,000 protein packed nutritious snacks were handed out.

This fair usually sees over 600,000 giving Southland Dairy Farmers a large audience to promote the dairy industry, help show people where their food comes from, and teach about the nutritional benefits of milk and all its wonderful products.

The Southland Team with the cheese basket for the auction

The Dairy Alliance Hosts Milk and Mingle Event

During National Dairy Month, The Dairy Alliance hosted influencers from across the Southeast for a Milk and Mingle event. The event took place at Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese in Austin, Kentucky, where attendees had the opportunity to observe and engage in hands-on experiences with the farm's daily operations.

A family-owned operation, Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese, has been producing artisan cheese for more than 25 years, using milk from its herd to craft high-quality dairy products. By welcoming visitors behind the scenes, the farm highlights the local pride and craftsmanship at the heart of dairy.

Ethan Mattingly, Manager, Community Wellness, and Elise Carpenter, Manager, Agricultural Affairs, Kentucky and Tennessee, with The Dairy Alliance, were both present at the event, playing key roles in ensuring an engaging experience for all.

Attendees participated in activities ranging from exploring the milk barn and watching robotic milkers to feeding bottle calves and assisting in the cheese-making process. Dairy farmer Kenny Mattingly and his team shared insights into daily farm life, sustainability initiatives, and herd management and care involved in producing their on-farm cheese. Attendees were also able to stay overnight on the farm, making the experience even more immersive and giving them a deeper understanding of the work and care that goes into dairy farming.

"It was the perfect way to celebrate National Dairy Month," dietitian and influencer Jessie Hulsey said on Instagram. "It was such a fun behind-the-scenes look at real dairy farming."

While visiting Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese, the influencers shared content highlighting the work that goes into the products made there and their firsthand experiences on the farm. Among them was influencer Sean the Science Kid, who not only posted about the visit but also hosted live streams that drew in hundreds of viewers, giving his followers a real-time look into dairy farming.

As digital platforms continue to shape food conversations, influencers play a major role in sharing the stories behind dairy. Partnering with influencers who align with values like health, sustainability, and community helps amplify these stories to wider audiences in authentic, relatable ways. The Dairy Alliance is proud to provide opportunities like Milk and Mingle that inspire content rooted in real experiences and help consumers connect with dairy.

For more information on Kenny's or to plan your next visit, check out kennyscheese.com.

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176 Pasadena Drive
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www.kydairy.org

SEP 4	CPC Fall Field Day	Fountain Run, KY
SEP 5	Kentucky Proud Livestock Classic	Casey Co Ag Expo
SEP 18	KDDC Board Meeting	Barren Co. Extension
SEP 15-21	National Farm Safety and Health Week
SEP 15-19	Kentucky's All in for Agriculture Education Week
SEP 24	SDBII Dairy Business Planning Grant Deadline
SEP 24	SDBII Specialty Processing Equipment Grant Deadline
SEP 24-25	Kentucky Milk Quality Conference	Bowling Green, KY
SEP 30 - OCT 3	KDDC Fall Tour to World Dairy Expo
NOV 6-10	North American International Livestock Expo	Louisville, KY
NOV 20	KDDC Board Meeting	Christian County
DEC 3-5	Kentucky Farm Bureau Annual Meeting	The Galt House
JAN 19-21	Georgia Dairy Conference	Savannah, GA
FEB 24-25	Kentucky Dairy Conference	Bowling Green, KY

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