

Resolution in Support of Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) Dairy Special Order of Business

WHEREAS, As America's dairyland — with more farms than any other state and second only to California in production — Wisconsin is best positioned place to lead a revival of family scale farms and set a strong example of reversing the downward trend of dairy farm closures; and

WHEREAS, Consolidation and huge expansions of industrial dairy production by CAFOs means communities face corporations financed by global capital, not family scale agriculture; and

WHEREAS, Existing local, state and federal policies will not build/rebuild a viable family- and community-scaled dairy farming and dairy structure in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, WFU's Dairy Committee recommends including local, state, and federal policy in one Special Order of Business to allow for the larger system level thinking; and

WHEREAS, WFU's Dairy Committee summarized those recommendations to be in the attached document.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that WFU's _____ Chapter assembled this _____ day of _____, hereby supports using the Dairy Committee recommendations at the 2026 WFU Convention as a Special Order of Business for 2027.

Summary Document to guide discussion of
Wisconsin Farmers Union Dairy Special Order of Business
For consideration in fall/winter 2026 for 2027 Policy

The Wisconsin Farmers Union Dairy Committee convened virtually on September 9, 2026 at 7pm via zoom for a scheduled meeting to consider policy recommendations. From this meeting the Dairy Committee recommends the following.

The goal with this document is to provide a summary of the policy “asks” to be included in a draft dairy focused Special Order of Business. We want to include local, state, and federal policy all in one Special Order. By combining all three levels of action, it allows for the larger system level thinking that the organization should support to build/rebuild a viable family- and community-scaled dairy farming and dairy structure in Wisconsin. (This summary document came out of a number of draft documents that provide more background detail/“whereas” statements on the different policy positions at the different levels. Scroll to the bottom of this document for links to those more detailed documents and drafts.)

At the local policy level Wisconsin Farmers Union supports:

- local governments in passing non-zoning ordinances that address the potential negative effects of large CAFO operations on local and regional public health and economies, emphasizing and ensuring that these ordinances do not apply to family scale farms but in fact level an uneven playing field.

At the state policy level Wisconsin Farmers Union supports:

- returning zoning authority over CAFOs to local governments preempted by Wisconsin's Livestock Facility Siting and Expansion Law (WI Statute 93.90), allowing local governments to impose animal unit caps appropriate to their geology and removing the cap on local fees and financial assurance in ACTP 51;
- strengthening technical assistance from DATCP and UW Extension for governments and communities facing CAFO developers;
- requesting the WIDNR put in place new guidelines for a second tier of CAFO regulation for corporate scale CAFOS with more than 5000 animal units;
- reintroduction and passage of the Dairy Cattle Innovation Program to provide immediate relief to small and average sized farms in the form of no-interest loans;
- state efforts to hold public hearings and community-engaged research to assess the socio-economic impacts of the consolidation, leading to fewer, larger and larger farms, in dairy production and also in the structure of dairy processing and supply chain

infrastructure and businesses, to inform a roadmap to revitalize the Wisconsin dairy industry for farmers and communities;

- improved assistance and regulation for small-scale on-farm processing. We call for ATCP 65 to be reformed to include provisions for a farmstead processor license to right-size the regulatory burden on small enterprises;
- State requirement of standardized, easy-to-understand producer milk checks that clearly show how farmers are paid, including prices, premiums, deductions, and fees. Protect farmers' right to share and compare their milk checks and pay prices without fear of retaliation from processors.

At the federal policy level Wisconsin Farmers Union:

- calls on Congress to pass the Milk From Family Dairies Act or similar legislation that would establish a farmer-led price discovery formula at the producer level through a growth management program that incentivizes matching production with market demand and meaningful supply management provisions that are responsive to regional differences;
- assure a real safety net for farmers, designing Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) formulas and other pricing policies to actually cover farmers' costs of production, taking into consideration different costs of production that may be dependent on herd size.
- re-evaluate the Federal Milk Marketing Order system in the United States and address the fear producers have to participate in the process, the impacts of block voting by cooperatives on behalf of their farmer-members, and the impact outside dollars and lawyers have in the current order system.
- reform all Class formulas to reflect the value and volume of all dairy products sold in the market today, as current milk pricing formulas fail to reflect the actual market value of dairy products, particularly mozzarella and other higher moisture and higher value dairy products;
- establish a national make allowance that is adjustable to reflect the difference between milk prices and the producer's cost of production. This allowance should be generated from the market, not deducted from the established price through end-product pricing;
- require mandatory participation of processors in an audited National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) survey of and an audited cold storage report, and use this data to report current prices and cold storage capacity in real time to producers.
- require mandatory, audited studies of dairy processor costs;

- support passage of the Converting Our Waste Sustainably (COWS) Act to provide resources for dairy farmers to change their nutrient management practices to reduce methane emissions.
- Support improving funding availability for the USDA Local Agricultural Market Program (LAMP) programs, allowing dairy farmers and small- and mid-scale dairy processors to access federal dollars.
- [We did not talk about it at the 9/9/26 meeting but we may want to add something about Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling for dairy in here also.]

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[Dairy Special Order Merging Emmet and Lisa's drafts](#)

[Dairy Special Order](#) - Emmet Fisher draft

[93.90 Siting Law Special Order](#) - Lisa Doer draft

[Initial rewrite Sarah did of the 2025 Dairy Special Order](#)

Federal recommendations come from work in the national Dairy Together coalition

<https://www.dairytogether.com/> facilitated by Wisconsin Farmers Union in collaboration with National Family Farm Coalition, National Farmers Union, California Dairy Coalition/California Farmers Union

HISTORIC DOCUMENTS:

[2026 WFU Policy Book](#) - position on ATCP 51

[2017 WFU Memo Critiquing ATCP 51](#)

[WFU CAFO Special Order of Business - Rationale](#) Date unknown