

# Wisconsin Farmers Union: Dairy Together events rally farmers to push for dairy policy reform

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Farmers and industry stakeholders are invited to join the conversation around the future of dairy in Wisconsin. Local chapters of the Farmers Union and Farm Bureau are collaborating on a series of Dairy Together events happening around Wisconsin in late March. The events aim to educate and rally farmers around potential dairy policy reforms such as the Dairy Revitalization Plan that could be achieved in the 2023 Farm Bill. Learn how we can work together to save dairy farms of all sizes.

“Though Wisconsin’s dairy farm crisis has fallen from the spotlight, the fact remains that we continue to lose more than one dairy herd per day on average here in America’s Dairyland,” said Chippewa County Farmers Union President Les Danielson, who raises crops and dairy farms near Cadott. “Farm organizations across the country are banding together to advocate on proposals to stabilize dairy prices and slow the loss of family farms, and we believe it is time to take a serious look at strategies to keep farms in business.”

“In the late 1990s, there were 20,000 dairy herds in Wisconsin; today that number has fallen to under 6,500, with fewer than 30,000 dairy farms remaining in the entire United States,” adds Joe Bragger, Independence dairy farmer and leader of the Buffalo County Farm Bureau. “To affect meaningful change, it’s going to take a strong coalition of farm groups and other industry stakeholders. Through these meetings, we’re pulling together farm organizations, agricultural lenders, equipment dealers, cooperative leaders and all who are being impacted by the dairy crisis. We need unity on our priorities for dairy policy reform as we head into the Farm Bill.”

The events will include a panel of local farmers and a presentation on the Dairy Revitalization Plan by leading dairy economists Chuck Nicholson and Mark Stephenson. Attendees will have the chance to use an app created by the UW Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems to learn how growth management would affect their income.

“The bottom line on what we found through this research was generally positive in terms of what these programs could do,” Nicholson said. “We saw reduced variation in prices and also some price enhancement, increased net farm operating incomes, reduction in the rate of farm exits across farms of all sizes, and a reduction in government expenditures on dairy programs.”

Upcoming events include:

- **ABBOTSFORD:** March 23, Abbotsford City Hall 203 N. 1st St, Abbotsford.
- **CASHTON:** March 24, Cashton Community Hall, 811 Main St., Cashton.
- **CHIPPEWA FALLS:** March 25, 2588 Highway 53, Chippewa Falls.

Each event will be from 11am-2pm. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP at [www.dairytogether.com](http://www.dairytogether.com).