



SLDDC nutrition educator Erin Rich (left) sat down with Gene and Kathy Scheer (center) and a cup of coffee to share with KLPW 1220 AM and thousands of listeners the 118-year-old Scheer family dairy story—including being the first dairy in Missouri to adopt a robotic milking system—during June Dairy Month. Read more on dairy producers in the media on page 3.

Dairy Producers Turn Storyteller in ‘Real Deal’ Interviews

This summer, 2.27 million listeners heard the real modern-day story of how they get their milk during the SLDDC June Dairy Month campaign, Dairy Farmers: The Real Deal.

“A lot of people don’t realize that dairy farmers milk cows 2 times a day,” says SLDDC executive director Margie Graham, adding that the average consumer doesn’t take into consideration that dairy farmers don’t get weekends or holidays off. “We wanted to tell the real story, and highlight the tremendous amount of work that goes into operating a dairy farm.”

Telling the stories were Illinois and Missouri dairy farmers who answered questions on the air, such

as “What time do you get up?” and “What is the life of a dairy farmer like?”

“You may have plans, but when you get out to the barn, it can change quite a bit,” explained dairy producer Dave Ruppert of Nokomis, Ill., in a print interview. “We have to find a way to get the job done every day.”

Jerry Knebel of Pocohontas, Ill., agreed: “It’s 7 days a week.” He acknowledged that it can be a struggle and said that as a result, farmers have to have a love for what they’re doing.

Featuring dairy farmers on the air telling their stories was a hit, Graham says, and the radio stations have asked dairy producers to come back next year.



SLDDC in Action is a quarterly newsletter produced by the St. Louis District Dairy Council.

St. Louis District Dairy Council
325 N. Kirkwood Road, Suite 222
St. Louis, MO 63122

314-835-9668
info@stldairyCouncil.org
www.stldairyCouncil.org

Sharing the Love

Thank you so much for participating in Ag Exploration Day. We were able to impact over 130 children this year! We are proud to offer this unique opportunity for urban children to learn about agriculture.

Sangamon County Farm Bureau
Young Leaders

However, she stresses that this is a message that SLDDC wants people to hear all throughout the year.

“The best way to learn where food comes from is to hear from those who grow it. We look forward to finding new ways to put people in touch with dairy farmers.”

Initiatives Deliver Good News, Real Stories about Dairy



Six years ago, we hosted the first Let's Talk Dairy conference to help our key contacts work through the maze of ever-evolving dairy information. Featuring a robust mix of speakers, the event has delivered the research, science, and facts supporting dairy to hundreds.

Of course, a lot has happened since our first conference. Back in 2009, the social media site Facebook had 360 million users worldwide. By 2014, the number grew to over 1.2 billion. Once considered a way to find old friends, Facebook is now a place to find news too, according to a 2013 Pew Research Center report.

That's the good news/bad news about social media. The good news: It allows you to reach millions of people with information—all with a simple click. The bad news: It allows you to reach millions of people with misinformation, all with a simple click.

Promoting dairy in today's world calls for correcting misinformation online and beyond. Whether during school visits, media interviews, or consumer events, our team of credentialed nutrition experts is committed to debunking dairy myths. And with initiatives like Let's Talk Dairy and Adopt-A-Cow, we're adding firepower to those efforts. We're involving dairy producers themselves. Who better to share genuine hands-on experience and real-life stories than those who grow and produce the dairy foods we promote?

St. Louis District Dairy Council recognizes the dynamic information world in which we live. And we welcome the challenges it presents. Since 1932, we've focused on communicating the role of dairy foods in a healthy diet. Whether online, in the classroom, or alongside our farmers, we'll continue to spread the good (and accurate) news about dairy in a compelling, personal way throughout Missouri and Illinois.

Margie Graham
SLDDC Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margie".

Panel Makes Encore Appearance at Dairy Conference

Back by popular demand, a panel of dairy producers answered questions from health professionals at SLDDC's annual Let's Talk Dairy conference in Springfield, Ill., on July 7.

Frank Doll, Mary Mackinson Faber, Jerry Knebel, and Mary Jo Varel fielded questions about antibiotics, animal care, and milk quality from the crowd of 65 health professionals.

"The panel gives health professionals a chance to visit directly with dairy farmers and hear their honest opinions," says SLDDC nutrition educator Monica Nyman.

Panelist Knebel gave his insight on how taking good care of cows requires daily observation and working with animal nutritionists on a regular basis.

When asked why her family chooses to farm, Varel shared, "It's a passion. I grew up on a dairy farm. My husband grew up on a dairy farm."

Faber concurred, noting that "dairy farmers are some of the hardest-working and most dedicated people you will ever meet." She also reminded attendees that "bottom line, you can be assured of the safety and nutritional value of dairy products."

Paired with the panel was a presentation on the nutrition and art of cheese tasting by Lana Shepek, a registered dietitian and certified cheesemonger—a person educated and skilled in everything cheese. Attendees learned how to properly taste 9 different cheeses, including

those locally produced by Marcoot Jersey Creamery and Ropp Jersey Cheese.

According to the second presenter, University of Illinois Professor Emeritus Donald Layman, the amino acids that make up the protein in cheese are easier for the human body to utilize than many plant-based proteins. Layman shared findings from his 33 years of research on protein, including that our bodies are better able to synthesize protein when we eat balanced portions throughout the day, versus in 1 or 2 meals.

"The conference is to keep our health professionals in the know regarding what is going on in the dairy industry," Nyman says. The conference provides 2 continuing education credits for dietitians.

Dairy Demonstrations Blossom at Summer Events

SLDDC hit some of your favorite summertime festivals to serve up cold chocolate milk and dish out dairy information during June Dairy Month.

Mascoutah (Ill.) Ice Cream Social: SLDDC nutrition educator Erin Rich gave hundreds of visitors the scoop on dairy and its 9 essential nutrients.

Ag Exploration Day, Sangamon, Ill.: SLDDC nutrition educator Joyce Fikri showed 5 to 10-year-olds how to shake things up with a container of cream for homemade butter.

Taste of Logan County (Ill.) Agriculture: SLDDC nutrition educator Monica Nyman gave locals a taste of one of their favorite locally produced foods—chocolate milk.

Heritage Days, Macomb, Ill.: Nyman made sure Heritage Days was complete by honoring dairy farmers and celebrating with chocolate milk.

The Art Run 5K Run, Four Rivers Area Family YMCA, Washington, Mo.: Rich helped runners refuel with chocolate milk samples and brought them up to speed on dairy's health benefits.

Students at Babler Elementary, St. Louis, Mo., watch in anticipation as their classmate churns butter for them to sample on their crackers during one of SLDDC's June Dairy Month events.



Farmers Shine in Local Limelight

What does the media really want to know about the dairy industry? What's the best thing about being a dairy farmer, and what is the most challenging for dairy producers?

These were some of the questions that radio hosts asked during SLDDC's 8 joint interviews with dairy producers during June Dairy Month.

"The dairy producers were able to talk about their farms, and then the radio hosts had a chance to ask questions," says SLDDC nutrition educator Joyce Fikri. "Some of the questions were about if farms are inspected and if the dairy farmer was a family farmer." Snippets of the interviews were then replayed throughout the week on several stations, including WSMI in Litchfield, Ill.

Fikri says that giving joint interviews and writing stories about dairy farming for the local newspaper are great ways to keep dairy in the headlines. "The media likes to focus on local, and people from their community."

Join the Club: 4-H Kids Bring New Ideas to Dairy Promotion

How many ways can you promote dairy in your community? Just ask the kids who are participating in the SLDDC 4-H club dairy contest.

From community ice cream socials, to handing out cheese sticks at the local food shelter, to rewarding summer-reading-program participants with ice cream certificates, the 36 Illinois and Missouri clubs are using their own ideas to promote dairy in the community.

SLDDC program coordinator Ellen Wheeler notes that participation has grown from 7 clubs last year to 36 clubs this year, adding that a lot of clubs were already promoting dairy during June Dairy Month.

SLDDC provides the clubs with funds to promote dairy during June Dairy Month or July Ice Cream Month. The clubs then create a "brag book" for a chance to win the title of Best 4-H Club Dairy Promotion of 2015. Two winning clubs will be chosen—one from Illinois and one from Missouri—in December.

SLDDC Promotes Dairy's Overall Benefits in WIC Switch

Whole or skim, all milk has the same bone-building calcium, the same brain-building vitamins, the same body-building protein, and the same muscle-building minerals.

This is the message that SLDDC nutrition educators are sharing with the 135,000 women who participate in Illinois and Missouri Women Infants and Children (WIC) program.

"WIC is nutritionally based and follows the USDA Dietary Guidelines that recommend low-fat milk to anyone over the age of 2 years," says SLDDC nutrition educator Laura Morton.

"The SLDDC Grab Dairy, Get Healthy kit helps WIC dietitians remind women that the low-fat milk they're buying for their family is still just as nutritious—it simply has a lower fat content than whole milk," Morton says.

Each WIC office receives posters highlighting the benefits of milk, activity sheets for children, nutrition brochures, and dairy recipes to help with the transition. "Our resources fit with WIC's goal of not just giving clients access to healthy food, but also teaching them how to make healthy food choices," Morton says.

WIC provides women with children under the age of 5 who are economically or nutritionally at risk with food vouchers that include fluid, condensed, and dried milk, as well as yogurt and cheese.

Adopt-A-Cow Distance Program Brings Kids Close to Farms

Forty-nine classrooms of students in grades K to 2 will be the proud parents of 3 adopted calves during the 2015/16 school year.

"Adopt-A-Cow is a pilot program that gives students a real look at a dairy farm without leaving the school," says SLDDC executive director Margie Graham.

"Each classroom gets to go online to the 'adoption barn' and watch introductory videos of each of the calves," she says. After the classrooms choose their calf, they receive a packet in the mail with information about it, such as the adoption certificate. During the next 8 months, each classroom receives monthly photo updates of their calf and classroom activities such as dairy fun facts and kid-friendly recipes.

"The idea for this initiative started 2 years ago to help schools that don't have the option to visit a dairy for a farm tour" due to distance, Graham says. "We want to give these kids the opportunity to feel a personal connection with dairy farmers."

SLDDC hopes to have 1,700 schools adopt calves during the next 3 years through the Adopt-A-Cow initiative, an extension of the From Your Local Farmer to You initiative.

Chocolate Milk Gets Locker-Room Boost with Fact Sheet, Poster

Myth or fact: You need to consume a large amount of protein after exercising for better muscle recovery.

According to David Lightsey, an adjunct professor of nutrition at Bakersfield College, consuming more than 20 to 25 grams of protein after exercising hinders muscle recovery because it has a diuretic effect—the body increases fluid output to prevent protein toxicity.

"This really shines light on why chocolate milk is superior" after a workout, says SLDDC nutrition educator Erin Rich. "It has the right mix of carbohydrates and protein scientifically shown to help refuel muscles."

She notes that carbohydrates in one cup of chocolate milk help replenish energy stores in muscles, while the 8 grams of protein helps build and repair them.

Partnering with Lightsey to address protein myths is part of SLDDC's Power Up initiative to educate high school and college athletes on the benefits of drinking chocolate milk after workouts. "We've extended this initiative to help address circulating myths related to protein supplements," Rich says. "The educational material is essential because it addresses a lot of misinformation that high school

and college athletes will hear over the course of time."

"Myths and Facts" sheets for athletes and chocolate milk posters for the locker rooms are part of the Power Up initiative that will reach 285 high schools and colleges during the 2015/16 school year.

"The purpose of the extension of the initiative is a visual reminder," Rich says. "When an athlete sees the poster hanging up in the locker room after practice, then they'll remember what they learned and drink chocolate milk, instead of an alternative and expensive sports drink or supplement."