

(6/12/24 District Administrator's Corner Article)

The State of Wisconsin celebrates June as Dairy Month. The International Dairy Foods Association began designating this month in 1937 as a way to promote drinking milk. Nationally, it was initiated to promote the market and has now developed into an annual tradition that celebrates the industry contributions. The history for the dairy industry is deep in the United States with cattle being first imported to Jamestown, Virginia as early as 1611.

Ironically, Wisconsin did not start as a dairy state, but later joined a national trend as wheat became problematic for small farmers due to problems in the 1860's. And, as the dairy industry grew in the 19th century, the University of Wisconsin began courses for farmers to better understand the scientific implications of their dairy products and grains. Our University of Wisconsin College of Agricultural and Life Science flourishes today with international recognition for its progressive research. Without a doubt, we can celebrate Dairy Month all year long as we reign as the nation's Cheese Capital. When you think of Wisconsin, there is one food that comes to mind ... cheese.

For more than a century, the state has led the nation in cheese production, producing over three billion pounds of cheese annually. Wisconsin cheesemakers combine generations of tradition with cutting edge innovation to craft the finest cheese, and Wisconsin is the only place outside of Europe to offer a prestigious Master Cheesemaker certification for veteran cheesemakers who have been making cheese for 10 years or more ([agdaily.com](http://agdaily.com)). Wisconsin also hosts the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest with local cheese industry businesses often walking away with awards and recognition.

The River Valley School District has a large tradition of honoring family farms and supporting our local FFA. Shari Graffunder, our agriculture education instructor, helps to coordinate over 70 student members, local activities (such as the School Fair) and other great agricultural activities. These students are continuing the generous tradition of agriculture in Wisconsin. Throughout the summer months, these students embrace the traditions of our agricultural industry with projects out of school.

So, when you see a sign posted which states "Thank A Farmer!", we should! Or if you are curious and are looking for activities around the state, visit [wisconsinmilk.org](http://wisconsinmilk.org). You will not have to look far as our towns are filled with neighbors that have deep roots in the dairy traditions in Wisconsin. And, when you order some cheese curds, buy a gallon of milk, or indulge in an ice cream sundae, just remember you are supporting your state and the great traditions of The Valley.

Mr. Loren G. Glasbrenner  
District Administrator