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In 2023, Retail Whole Milk Prices Averaged Record \$4.34 A Gallon

Average Retail Price For Reduced Fat Milk Was Also A Record In 2023, At \$4.29 Per Gallon

Washington—The average retail price for conventional whole milk in 30 selected cities or metro areas in federal milk marketing order markets in 2023 was \$4.34 per gallon, up eight cents from 2022 and a new record high.

This year was the second straight year in which the average retail price for conventional whole milk averaged above \$4.00 per gallon. Prior to 2022, the record-high average retail whole milk price was \$3.84 per gallon, set in 2014.

These average retail milk prices are collected by federal order market administrators based on a survey conducted one day between the 1st and 10th of each month in 30 selected cities or metro areas. One outlet of the largest and second largest food store chains are surveyed. The determination of the largest and second largest food store chain is based on estimated sales of fluid milk products in the metro area. The same outlet is surveyed each month.

The price obtained is for the most common brand, based on shelf space, and does not represent a temporary special price, or one that is dependent on the purchase of other food items or the use of a cents-off coupon.

In 2023, average retail whole milk prices ranged from a low of \$4.29 per gallon in August to a high of \$4.43 per gallon in January. This was the first year ever that retail whole milk prices averaged above \$4.00 per gallon in all 12 months; in 2022, retail whole milk prices had averaged under \$4.00 per gallon in the first two months of the year and above that level for the next 10 months.

Although retail whole milk prices averaged a record high this year, the highest price ever for a single month was actually set in December 2022, at \$4.44 per gallon. In fact, retail whole milk prices averaged above \$4.40 per gallon in six months last year, but only averaged above that level once this year.

Among the 30 surveyed cities and metro areas, the lowest average retail whole milk price this year was found in Louisville, KY, at \$2.94 per gallon. During the year, retail whole milk prices in Louisville ranged from a low of \$2.70 per gallon in January, February, March and April to a high of \$3.20 per gallon in September, October and November.

Louisville was the only city among the 30 surveyed that had an average retail whole milk price under \$3.00 per gallon this year.

Average retail whole milk prices averaged below \$4.00 per gallon in 2023 in six cities: Cincinnati, OH, \$3.41 per gallon; Dallas, TX, \$3.63 per gallon; Detroit, MI, \$3.79 per gallon; Houston, TX, \$3.77 per gallon; Indianapolis, IN, \$3.20 per gallon; and Syracuse, NY, \$3.75 per gallon.

At the other extreme, Kansas City, MO, posted the highest average retail whole milk price in 2023, at \$6.05 per gallon. During the year, average retail whole milk prices in Kansas City ranged from a low of \$5.91 per gallon in July

• See **Record Retail Prices**, p. 11

EU Expected To Keep Dairy Export Volumes Stable Despite Declining Milk Production

Brussels, Belgium—The European Union (EU) is expected to keep its dairy export volumes stable through 2035 despite decreasing milk production, according to an EU medium-term agricultural outlook report released earlier this month by the European Commission.

The EU and New Zealand will remain the world's top two dairy product exporters, with each accounting for around 24 percent, the report said.

Expectations for stricter EU and national environmental policies will likely force the EU dairy herd to shrink 13 percent by 2035, compared with the 2021-23 average. And yield growth is expected to slow (0.9 percent per year), reaching only half the growth rate seen in the past decade.

As a result, EU milk production could decline by 0.2 percent per year on average between now and 2035, the report predicted.

New Zealand's milk production will also likely slow down, as the potential growth in milk yields is limited in grassland-based systems, and increasing pressure from environmental policies disfavors a larger cow herd.

US milk production, facing less strict sustainability constraints, will grow the most among the

• See **EU Dairy Exports**, p. 5

Australia Becoming More Prominent Dairy Importer; New Zealand, US, EU Are Key Sources

Southbank, Victoria, Australia—Australia is becoming a “much more prominent dairy importer,” shipping in the largest volume of overseas dairy in a single season during 2022/23, according to the December 2023 “Situation and Outlook Report” from Dairy Australia.

Although overseas dairy products have long had a presence in the Australian market, as the population grows, and consumption trends evolve, the nature and scale of imports has “changed dramatically,” the report noted. Before the 2000s, cheese accounted for over

• See **Australia's Imports**, p. 9

Rise Of Scarmoza, Melty Cheeses, Whey-Based Drinks: 2024 Trends

Madison—After years of plant-based dairy alternatives dominating trend forecasts, nostalgic and functional cheese and dairy innovations are predicted to gain ground in 2024.

Specifically, whey-based beverages may be considered the new kombucha; Scarmoza cheese the new Asiago; and “melty” cheeses like Raclette and Halloumi providing consumers comfort, nostalgia and an occasion to gather.

Prognosticators also agree on the all-encompassing practice of incorporating social media with menus and food brands.

The National Restaurant Association's *What's Hot 2024* identified the incorporation of social media trends into restaurant menus and food marketing as a “Macro Trend” for the coming year.

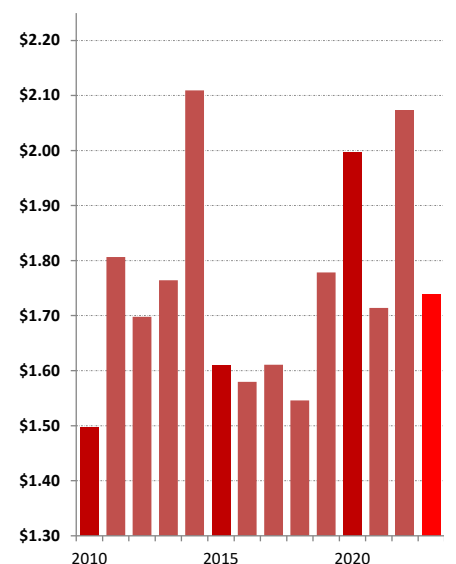
More than 1,500 culinary professionals agreed the use of platforms like TikTok can help restaurant fare go viral, while restaurants have the opportunity to turn online food fads into innovative menu additions and limited time offers (LTO).

Consumers are increasingly using social media to find new restaurants or discover new menu items, global foodservice and ingredient source Lyons Magnus agreed. With some 63 percent of consumers using social media to guide their restaurant and food choices, expect to see restaurant chains allocating even more attention to social media and digital marketing.

Coming in at number five of the Restaurant

• See **2024 Food Trends**, p. 10

Average Yearly Block Price CME Since 2010





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EDITORIAL COMMENT



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But it would be surprising, if not shocking, to see Congress pass another one-year extension of the farm bill rather than finalizing a new five-year farm bill

A Few Dairy Predictions For 2024

Making dairy-related predictions is generally a risky undertaking, but as 2023 draws to a close, we thought we'd take a stab at making at least a handful of predictions for 2024.

One thing we're reasonably confident in predicting is that the ongoing national federal milk marketing order hearing will finally end. This is the hearing that started in August, recessed in October, reconvened in November, recessed again in December and will reconvene on Jan. 16, 2024.

And the hearing should wrap up sometime that week, or shortly thereafter.

After that, there are several additional predictions that can safely be made regarding this federal order proceeding, thanks to USDA's online "brochure," on the federal order amendment process. This 12-step process is currently at Step 5, which is USDA holding a public hearing.

Once the hearing finally wraps up, the timetable includes the following: the hearing record is made available within two weeks of the completion of the hearing; interested parties may, within 30 days after the hearing record is made available, file suggested corrections to the hearing transcript; participants may then, within 60 days, file post-hearing briefs; USDA must then, not later than 90 days later, issue a recommended decision; comments may be filed, within 60 days, on that recommended decision; USDA has to issue a final decision within 60 days of the deadline for submitting comments on the recommended decision; and then USDA holds a referendum so that producers are able to approve or reject the federal orders as amended.

Thus, assuming that the hearing concludes by the end of January, corrections to the hearing transcript might be due by mid-March; post-hearing briefs

might be due by mid-May; a recommended decision might be issued by mid-August; comments on that recommended decision might be due by mid-October; and a final decision might be released by the end of 2024.

So our first prediction for 2025 is that federal order amendments based on the 2023-2024 national hearing will finally be implemented, or rejected.

Another thing the dairy industry can expect in 2024 is a new farm bill. A year ago, we actually predicted that the dairy industry could expect a new farm bill in 2023, given that the 2018 farm bill expired at the end of September 2023. However, instead of passing a new farm bill, Congress extended that 2018 farm bill for another year.

But it would be surprising, if not shocking, to see Congress pass another one-year extension of the farm bill rather than finalizing a new five-year farm bill, if for no other reason than organizations ranging from the American Farm Bureau Federation to the National Farmers Union are urging Congress to pass a new farm bill as early in 2024 as possible.

The process of updating the Dietary Guidelines for Americans will continue in 2024, although the next edition of the Dietary Guidelines probably won't be released until near the end of 2025.

In 2024, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee will continue its work, including its fourth meeting, which is scheduled for Jan. 19, 2024. The DGAC will meet approximately six times and is expected to conclude its work in late 2024, when it submits a scientific report to the secretaries of agriculture and health and human services.

But the Dietary Guidelines will be "in the news" in 2024 for additional reasons, as well. Just to cite one example: USDA's

Food and Nutrition Service is expected to issue a final rule sometime in 2024 that would finalize long-term school nutrition standards based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. These standards deal with, among other things, fluid milk, sodium, and added sugars.

That final rule could, in turn, influence the 2024 farm bill. Depending on what USDA decides to do with school fluid milk standards, Congress may opt to include the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act in the farm bill. That legislation was approved earlier this month by a healthy bipartisan margin in the House.

Meanwhile, we expect to see some interesting developments at the US Food and Drug Administration in 2024. We'll mention just a couple of those developments here.

First, FDA will possibly issue a final rule sometime in 2024 to provide for the use of fluid ultrafiltered milk in the manufacture of standardized cheeses and related cheese products. This proceeding dates back to December of 1999 and includes, among other things, a proposed rule released in 2005, reopened comment periods in 2007 and 2019, and guidance regarding enforcement discretion for the use and labeling of UF milk in certain cheeses in 2017.

Also in 2024, FDA is expected to issue a final rule that would update the existing definition of the implied nutrient content claim "healthy" by requiring that food products bearing the claim contain a certain amount of food from recommended food groups, including dairy, and also require such foods to be limited in saturated fat, sodium and added sugar.

All in all, 2024 promises to be another mighty interesting year for the dairy industry.

Limited Milk Supply Growth Expected To Lead To Slow Dairy Price Recovery

Utrecht, Netherlands—There is growing evidence that the bottom of the dairy commodity markets has passed, and the general trend is for prices to move higher through 2024, according to a recent report from Rabobank.

As 2023 draws to a close, the global dairy market continues to walk a tightrope of limited “new” milk and sluggish demand, the report noted.

Looking back on 2023, it is a story of soft global dairy commodity pricing due to weaker underlying fundamentals.

Milk supply growth around the world was “underwhelming” in 2023, the report continued, with a brief return to growth for three straight quarters before lower milk prices, elevated costs, and weather disruption put the brakes back on.

The global markets patiently awaited the rebalancing of the Chinese market, only to experience the second straight year of large shortfalls in net dairy imports.

the report pointed out. Demand settings are on the mend, but market uncertainty remains due to rising unemployment in some economies. Its ongoing impact on consumer purchasing power will be a watch for 2024.

China’s import appetite for dairy commodities is still expected to drive any Oceania commodity price rally in 2024.

Rabobank expects China’s import volume to flatline in 2024, which would be a positive result, given the previous two years of withdrawal from the global markets.

This is an opportunity for importers outside of China to build stocks in 2024, the report stated. Prices are moving modestly higher, from low bases, and the current demand signals have yet to trigger a rush to take coverage.

In Rabobank’s view, the base case is for a slow recovery in commodity prices back to long-term averages. However, current fun-

damentals provide the perfect ingredients for price volatility and a possible market whiplash.

A high degree of risk and uncertainty permeates all global markets, including dairy, the report noted.

Geopolitical instability risks, volatile energy markets, and weak macroeconomic conditions will be something to watch in 2024 for the global dairy markets and the broader food system.

Factors to watch in 2024, according to Rabobank’s report, include, among others:

- A mildly softer grain and oilseed price outlook across much of the agricultural complex is expected in 2024. Rabobank’s *Agri Commodity Markets Research 2024 Outlook* points to a boost in the global feed grain supply, which is positive for dairy farm margins.

- El Nino risks remain a key factor to watch across many food and agricultural markets. A moderate El Nino through 2024 will create challenges in some production regions, mainly for Southern Hemisphere livestock producers and crop farmers.

- Livestock markets continue to be mixed in export regions, with strong cull cow prices in the US market, in contrast to weaker prices in Europe and Oceania. This is impacting cash flow at a time of milk price downturn.

- China’s economic recovery was slower than expected through much of 2023. Recently announced sizeable stimulus packages will provide support, but will also take time to kick in.

- The Israel-Hamas war is a humanitarian crisis and has created heightened risk to global markets. An escalation of the war to a broader regional conflict would be problematic for oil markets, the global economy, and the wider food system.

- The US dollar has been on a bumpy ride on the back of weak inflation data. The global risk appetite and the strength of the US economy will drive its future direction and may enhance the outlook for riskier currencies.

A softer United States dollar will partly offset some of the commodity US dollar recovery for dairy exporters as their currencies appreciate.

“The milk supply export engine never fully fired on all cylinders in 2023 and declined year-on-year in the third quarter by 0.2 percent...Overall, milk supply is forecast to grow by a modest 0.3 percent for the entire year.”

—Michael Harvey, Rabobank.

Rabobank’s milk supply outlook for 2024 has weakened, with sluggish growth expected across most export regions.

“The milk supply export engine never fully fired on all cylinders in 2023 and declined year-on-year in the third quarter by 0.2 percent,” said Michael Harvey, senior analyst-dairy at Rabobank.

“Year-over-year milk production from the Big 7 exporting regions is forecast to decrease through Q1 2024 before turning positive,” Harvey added. “Overall, milk supply is forecast to grow by a modest 0.3 percent for the entire year.”

The next phase of the demand story remains key to watch, according to the report.

It’s a complex story of high dairy inflation, broader cost-of-living issues, and weak consumer confidence remaining on the horizon.

Sluggish underlying dairy demand and changes in consumer purchases are impacting volumes in some economies and channels,



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Employees: One of Your Best Risk Management Tools

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There is no shortage of staffing shortages in dairy processing plants around the country. A survey conducted by the Dairy Food Safety Alliance with dairy sanitation inspectors from the Midwest and New Mexico revealed these shortages are not merely causing workforce gaps but are also leading to food safety violations.

In the survey, the dairy inspector respondents shared the most common violations encountered in dairy plant inspections:

- Plant cleanliness;
- Construction and repair of equipment;
- Protection from contamination; and
- Sanitation of containers and equipment.

The common denominator leading to these infractions? More often than not, the root cause of the infractions were employees – either the lack of employees (labor shortages) or lack of training for new employees. Even dairy processing plants that appeared fully staffed lacked employee training, which directly impacts food safety practices. Being fully staffed doesn't necessarily mean "fully skilled".

Staffing shortages in dairy plants is not a new challenge. And, over the past several years, leadership at dairy processing plants have taken a number of

steps to overcome these issues. According to the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, some of the approaches processors have taken include:

- Increasing investments in automation, both as a workaround to the ongoing labor shortage and to improve their workers' experiences and their plants' overall productivity.

- Paying more: Industry wages, on average, rose faster than inflation in the immediate post-COVID period. Dairy processors are directly investing in their workforce to attract and retain leaders who can help their businesses grow.

- Devoting more resources to effective training programs and accessing training opportunities through vendor partners.

Considering the critical importance of food safety to the operation, it's vital that there is open communication between food safety leadership and human resources about the impact of staffing shortages.

Human resources teams looking to find support in recruiting and retaining team members can consider a sometimes overlooked source of help – their employee benefits broker. While this may not be the first approach that comes to mind, there is value in engaging with the company's

employee benefits broker and including the broker as part of the recruitment and retention team.

A benefits broker can be a partner in strategizing how to recruit, retain, and engage talent. From a recruitment perspective, questions to ask a broker in order to engage their services might include:

- How do our benefits compare to similar organizations? Are we competitive in the marketplace?

- What unique benefits exist that might help us attract and retain multi-generational team members.

- Are their resources outside the insurance realm such as grants, non-profit organizations and training resources that can enhance our workforce development efforts?

Transitioning from overcoming staff shortages, once a dairy processor has successfully attracted talent to the plant, the next step is retaining those staff members. Some of the more common retention strategies deployed include:

- Understand the different needs between generations – especially regarding benefits.

- Communicate benefit opportunities through a multichannel approach based on your employee demographics.

- Be intentional about connecting with a culturally diverse workforce. This may include engaging with linguistic and cultural experts to identify how to connect with a multi-cultural, non-English-speaking workforce.

No simple solution exists to resolving the labor challenge. By taking a team approach and combining the input from food safety, human resources and the benefits broker, the dairy processor increases the likelihood of winning the war for talent. *JPG*

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

50 YEARS AGO

Dec. 28, 1973: Washington—The change from quart glass bottles to paper containers for milk is one example of dramatic change in US dairy product distribution. Another is the sharp decline in the number of milk processing plants, from about 8,500 in 1948 to roughly 2,000 in 1971.

Washington—The disastrous economic experiment of wage and price controls has placed hundreds of products in critically short supply and continued production of thousands of other items is in serious jeopardy, according to the National Association of Manufacturers. Four out of five businesses believe controls are fueling inflation.

25 YEARS AGO

Jan. 1, 1999: Madison—Facilitator Capital Fund, a private equity group, has completed the purchase of rondelé Foods of Merrill, WI. The company, with \$23 million in annual sales, was purchased by Vermont's Waterbury Holdings.

Albany, NY—Congressional approval of New York's entry into the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact is far from a sure thing, both opponents and proponents say. Once considered by supporters to be little more than a formality, authorization is being complicated by possible impeachment of President Clinton.

10 YEARS AGO

Dec. 27, 2013: New Berlin, NY—Chobani, Inc. announced that its Twin Falls, ID, facility has reached optimal production capability, a milestone achieved in less than a year. This serves to support continued growth and demand for Chobani's Greek Yogurt, for which sales have increased 32 percent year-to-date.

Lucerne, Switzerland—Cheese will continue to be Emmi's primary focus in the US, but with a stake of around 25 percent in the yogurt operations of siggi's, as well as collaboration in the making of that company's yogurts, Emmi will be able to take part in the dynamic growth of the US yogurt market.

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Virginia-Based Bates Family Farm To Construct New Creamery

Richmond, VA—Bates Family Farm, LLC, will create 12 new jobs and invest nearly \$1 million to relocate its manufacturing facility to a 40,000-square-foot building that is owned by Russell county to meet growing consumer demand for its goat milk-based skincare products, Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin announced Wednesday.

This space will allow for the development of new products, additional production capacity, and warehouse space.

In addition, Bates Family Farm will construct a new creamery to produce food products, bottled goat milk and artisan cheeses for wholesale and retail distribution.

Bates Family Farm is committed to purchasing 100 percent of all expected agricultural products from Virginia, an increase of more than \$2 million over the next three years as a result of this expansion.

Shannon and Joseph Bates established Bates Family Farm in Russell county in 2013. The company produces a full line of goat milk-based skincare products, including soap, and body cream, that are sold in over 1,000 retail stores and specialty shops.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services worked with Russell county and the Russell County Industrial Development Authority to secure the project for Virginia. Youngkin approved a \$70,000 grant from the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund, which Russell county will match with local funds.

"This AFID grant award and the support we have received from Russell county are critical factors in our decision to move forward with this project," commented Joseph Bates, CEO of Bates Family Farm. "

"I congratulate the Bates family on this AFID award and thank them for their investment in Russell county and Virginia agriculture," said Matthew Lohr, Virginia's secretary of agriculture and forestry. "The commitment to purchasing all Virginia grown goat milk is a tremendous benefit to Virginia goat milk producers and increases the visibility of specialty product producers in southwest Virginia."

"This project increases economic development activity in Russell county, provides new jobs in a rural area, and demonstrates our support of the Commonwealth's dairy industry and to Virginia's entire agricultural community," Youngkin said.

EU Dairy Exports

(Continued from p. 1)

large dairy exporters, and reinforce its third position as global exporter (20 percent share of exports in 2035). Argentina could strengthen its exporter position.

Feeding strategies and some herd replacement (e.g., more dairy cow breeds offering more butterfat and protein content) could still help EU milk content improve in the coming years, the report said.

The progress of the past decade is likely not to be repeated, as it was mainly driven by EU countries with dairy herds composed of cows producing milk with a higher milk solids content (e.g., Denmark, Ireland and Austria). On the other hand, climate change induced fluctuations in feed availability, feed quality and caused heat stress to cows. These factors could contribute to reduced milk solids also in the future.

Overall, despite a slight increase, the greater availability of milk solids cannot compensate for the reduction in EU raw milk supply, leading to a forecast of 1 percent decrease in milkfat and an almost 2 percent decrease in non-fat solids by 2035.

The portfolio of EU dairy products will have to adjust to this, the report stated. The main drivers of change in the EU's dairy industry include changes in consumer preferences, competition with other global suppliers and increasing processing costs, which reduce margins for traditional dairy products and force processors to produce more, and higher-value-added, commodities.

The cheese and whey production streams are expected to grow by around 2.3 million tons of milk

equivalent and could absorb 36 percent of the EU milk pool by 2035, the report said. Skim milk powder could achieve a limited growth (up 2.3 percent by 2035), and butter production could remain stable, while other dairy products are likely to decline for different reasons.

Whole milk powder production is expected to decline, mostly due to declining EU competitiveness, while the consumption of drinking milk is likely to continue its long-term declining trend. And whey products are affected by reduced global demand, due to increasing domestic production in China.

The EU domestic market remains the most important outlet, and is set to account for 88 percent of EU milk production in 2035.

And EU per capita dairy product consumption will likely remain stable, falling by only 0.1 percent per year by 2035, relative to high levels achieved in 2021-23.

Changing consumer preferences will continue affecting dairy consumption, the report said. Younger consumers are expected to opt for dairy products with lower fat and sugar content or products addressing food intolerances (e.g., lactose intolerance).

Cheese is and will likely remain, the EU's flagship export product, with exports further increasing, by 0.8 percent per year between now and 2035, the report said.

European Union cheese consumption could also increase, by 0.3 percent per year, relative to already-high levels in 2021-23, although recent food-price inflation has slowed down the post-COVID-19 recovery to some extent.

Within the fresh dairy products (FDP) category, while drinking milk consumption is expected to further decline in the future, consumption of yogurts and cream could remain stable, or even increase slightly, in part due to novel product lines that address consumer interest in fortified (e.g., yogurts with added proteins) or convenience products (e.g., drinkable yogurts).

However, total FDP consumption in the EU is expected to decline (by 0.7 percent per year between now and 2035), while exports of FDP will likely decline after the high levels of 2021-23, in part due to increasing demand in China.

The prospects for EU whey powder production are set to be boosted by strong global demand, driven by increasing food use and new product lines covering nutritional or health functions. EU whey production could increase by 0.3 percent per year between now and 2035, while EU whey exports could increase by 0.4 percent per year over the same period.

At the same time, domestic use could grow by around 0.4 percent per year by 2035.

Both reduced global demand and low EU competitiveness are set to contribute to a whole milk powder production decline with EU WMP exports likely to experience a pronounced fall of 5 percent annually.

Overall, while total EU dairy exports are forecast to remain stable in volume terms, they are still expected to increase in value. This is partly due to expectations for a greater share of added-value products in the export portfolio, and partly due to rising export prices, the report said.

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Class IV Volume On Seven Orders In November: 681.8 Million Pounds

Washington—The volume of milk pooled in Class IV in November in the seven federal milk marketing orders that pay dairy farmers a producer price differential (PPD) totaled 681.8 million pounds, up 12.6 million pounds from October but down 89 million pounds from November 2022, according to the uniform price announcements for those orders.

That's the second straight month, and the third time in the last four months, in which Class IV volume on the orders was under 700 million pounds. The exception during that period was in September, when Class IV volume totaled 1.14 billion pounds.

Class III volume on the seven orders in November totaled 6.68 billion pounds, down 261.2 million pounds from October and down 497 million pounds from November 2022. That was the third consecutive month in which Class III volume on the seven orders was under 7.0 billion pounds.

All seven orders reported positive PPDs, ranging from 33 cents per hundredweight on the Upper Midwest order to \$3.59 per hundred on the Northeast order.

Class III volume on the California order totaled 1.4 billion pounds, down 51.4 million pounds from October and down 1.3 million pounds from November 2022. Class III volume on the California order has now topped 1.4 billion pounds for seven straight months.

Class III utilization was 71.7 percent, down from 71.9 percent in October but up from 70.5 percent in November 2022.

November Class IV volume on the California order totaled 50.0

million pounds, down 536,629 pounds from October and down 30.9 million pounds from November 2022. Class IV utilization was 2.6 percent, up from 2.5 percent in October but down from 4.1 percent in November 2022.

A total of 1.95 billion pounds of milk was pooled on the California order in November, down 66.5 million pounds from October and down 35.2 million pounds from November 2022.

Class III volume on the Upper Midwest totaled 2.39 billion pounds, down 65.5 million pounds from October and down 373.5 million pounds from November 2022. Class III utilization was 92.3 percent, down from 92.4 percent in October and down from 93.0 percent in November 2022.

November Class IV volume on the Upper Midwest order totaled 11.2 million pounds, down 745,015 pounds from October and down 1.6 million pounds from November 2022. Class IV utilization was 0.4 percent, unchanged from October 2023 and also unchanged from November 2022.

A total of 2.6 billion pounds was pooled on the Upper Midwest down 66.2 million pounds from October and down 381.8 million pounds from November 2022.

On the Southwest order, Class III volume totaled 632.8 million pounds, down 39.8 million pounds from October and down 74.2 million pounds from November 2022. Class III utilization was 61.7 percent, down from 62.0 percent in October and down from 63.6 percent in November 2022.

Class IV volume on the Southwest order in November totaled

7.3 million pounds, up 1.5 million pounds from October but down 13.2 million pounds from November 2022. Class IV utilization was 0.7 percent, up from 0.5 percent in October but down from 1.8 percent in November 2022.

A total of 1.03 billion pounds of milk was pooled on the Southwest order in November, down 59 million pounds from October and down 86.9 million pounds from November 2022.

November Class III volume on the Central order totaled 650 million pounds, down 26.1 million pounds from October and down 68.6 million pounds from November 2022. Class III utilization was 53.0 percent, down from 53.2 percent in October and down from 55.7 percent in November 2022.

Class IV volume on the Central order totaled 123.3 million pounds, down 9.6 million pounds from October but up 5.0 million pounds from November 2022. Class IV utilization was 10.1 percent, down from 10.4 percent in October but up from 9.2 percent in November 2022.

A total of 1.23 billion pounds of milk was pooled on the Central order, down 46.3 million pounds from October and down 63.3 million pounds from November 2022.

Class III volume on the Mideast order totaled 667 million pounds, down 14.3 million pounds from October and down 4.9 million pounds from November 2022. Class III utilization was 44.9 percent, down from 45.4 percent in October and down from 51.0 percent in November 2022.

Class IV volume on the Mideast order totaled 52 million pounds, up 1 million pounds from October and up 26.4 million pounds from November 2022. Class IV utilization was 3.5 percent, up from 3.4 percent in October and up from 1.9 percent in November 2022.

A total of 1.49 billion pounds of milk was pooled on the Mideast order in November, down 14.8 million pounds from October but up 167.3 million pounds from November 2022.

On the Northeast order, Class III volume totaled 639.5 million pounds, down 48.9 million pounds from October but up 13.3 million pounds from November 2022. Class III utilization was 29.6 percent, down from 30.5 percent in October but up from 28.7 percent in November 2022.

Class IV volume on the Northeast order totaled 315.6 million pounds, up 26.4 million pounds from October but down 63.2 million pounds from November 2022. Class IV utilization was 14.6 percent, up from 12.8 percent in October but down from 17.4 percent in November 2022.

A total of 2.16 billion pounds of milk was pooled on the Northeast order, down 92.2 million pounds from October and down 16 million pounds from November 2022.

Class III volume on the Pacific Northwest order totaled 299.3 million pounds, down 15.3 million pounds from October but up 11.2 million pounds from November 2022. Class III utilization was 51.4 percent, down from 51.6 percent in October but up from 49.2 percent in November 2022.

Class IV volume on the Pacific Northwest order totaled 122.2 million pounds, down 5.5 million pounds from October and down 13.8 million pounds from November 2022. Class IV utilization was 21.0 percent, up from 20.9 percent in October but down from 23.2 percent in November 2022.

A total of 582.5 million pounds of milk was pooled on the Pacific Northwest order in November, down 27.3 million pounds from October and down 2.7 million pounds from November 2022.

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Senate Bill Aims To Strengthen FDA's Generally Recognized As Safe Rule

Washington—US Sens. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and Cory Booker (D-NJ) recently introduced legislation that would direct the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to strengthen its Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) rule.

Specifically, the Ensuring Safe and Toxic-Free Foods Act of 2023 directs FDA to revise the GRAS rule to include provisions that:

- Prohibit manufacturers from designating substances as safe without supplying proper notice and supporting information.

- Require safety information be publicly available on the FDA website and subject to a 90-day public review period.

- Prohibit carcinogenic substances from receiving GRAS designation.

- Prohibit substances that show evidence of reproductive or developmental toxicity from receiving GRAS designation.

- Prohibit people with conflicts of interest from serving as experts in evaluating scientific data regarding GRAS designations.

- Create a procedure of reassessment for substances receiving previous GRAS designations.

The legislation also directs the secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), FDA's parent agency, to create an Office of Food Chemical Safety, Dietary Supplements, and Innovation within FDA. This office would be charged with reassessing whether existing food additives, food contact substances, color additives, and GRAS substances are safe.

The office would be required to reassess at least 10 such substances (or classes of substances) once every three years and identify any unsafe substances or, for substances deemed safe, identify their conditions of use.

The legislation also sets noticing procedures for collecting information relevant to selection and reassessment of substances (or classes of substances). Finally, it establishes a standing Food Chemical Committee within the Science Board to advise the HHS secretary on standards, process, and methods necessary for the reassessment of substances.

The Ensuring Safe and Toxic-Free Foods Act is endorsed by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), Environmental Working Group (EWG), Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Breast Cancer Prevention Partners, and Earthjustice.

“For far too long, companies have utilized the GRAS loophole to secretly introduce new chemicals into our foods without ever notifying the FDA. The Ensuring

Safe and Toxic-Free Foods Act helps close the GRAS loophole and keep dangerous chemicals out of our foods,” said Peter Lurie, CSPI's president.

“The Ensuring Safe and Toxic-Free Foods Act addresses two critical shortcomings of the FDA's program to protect consumers from additives to food: the Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) loophole that allows new chemicals to be added to food without FDA review and the lack of a system to reassess past agency actions for additives we now recognize as unsafe,” said Tom Neltner, senior director of safer chemicals at EDF.

“We applaud Senator Markey for his ongoing leadership on this

important public health issue,” Neltner added.

“This vital legislation will finally fix a system that has allowed thousands of chemicals into our food that have never been scrutinized by the FDA,” said Daniel Savery, senior legislative representative at Earthjustice.

“Critically, this bill will also require the FDA to use the best available science to review the safety of harmful food chemicals already in commerce,” Savery continued.

“It is long past time for the United States to join the rest of the modern world in protecting its consumers from harmful chemicals in food.”

“Chemicals linked to cancer and other serious health problems are in our daily food – leaching

from the packaging and processing materials. This is unacceptable, and why we support the Ensuring Safe and Toxic-Free Foods Act,” said Lisette Van Vliet, senior policy coordinator at Breast Cancer Prevention Partners.

“This important legislation will close a federal loophole that allows companies to secretly use toxic chemicals for food packaging and processing without FDA oversight or approval,” Van Vliet added.

“Our legislation ensures that the FDA doesn't fall short on their responsibility to ensure that the food we eat is safe,” Markey said. “It is long past time that we revise existing food safety measures and close the loophole by allowing manufacturers to self-regulate what new substances can enter our food supply.”



Upcycled Certified® Program Acquired By Where Food Comes From, Inc.

Castle Rock, CO—Where Food Comes From, Inc. (WFCF), which provides third-party verification of food production practices, on Wednesday announced it has acquired the Upcycled Certified® Program from the Upcycled Food Association (UFA).

Upcycled Certified, the world's first and largest provider of certification for upcycled food, has emerged as a dynamic force that is reshaping the way manufacturers valorize all parts of the food chain and avoid food waste, WFCF noted.

Upcycled Certified is now one of the fastest-growing certification seals in the food industry, providing consumers a tangible solution to shop sustainably.

There are currently 93 companies with more than 480 products certified to the Upcycled Certified standard, Where Food Comes From, Inc. said.

The Upcycled Standard, developed by the UFA, is designed to reduce food waste by promoting the upcycled food economy.

Upcycled products use ingredients that have full nutritional value and are safe but for various reasons would have gone to waste.

Operators that grow, produce, manufacture, process, and trade in food, beverages and other food-related products are eligible to apply for Upcycled Certified.

These operators must demonstrate that ingredients they handle have been procured and produced using verifiable supply chains.

"This acquisition enables Where Food Comes From to

meet growing consumer demand for products that contain upcycled food ingredients," said John Saunders, chairman and CEO of WFCF.

"Our first order of business following the ownership transition will be to make it easier and more cost-effective for brands, grocery retailers and foodservice operators to engage with the standard, ultimately expanding the offering of upcycled products and making it easier for consumers to eat well and be a part of the food waste solution," Saunders continued. "Our long-term objective is to make Upcycled Certified a ubiquitous standard and a meaningful component of our overall revenue mix."

The Upcycled Food Association is a nonprofit focused on reducing food waste by growing the upcycled food economy. Through research, standardization, and consumer education, the UFA is building a food system in which all food is elevated to its highest and best use.

For more information, visit www.upcycledfood.org.

Through its IMI Global, Validus Verification Services, SureHarvest, WFCF Organic, and Postelsia divisions, Where Food Comes From services verify food claims, optimize production practices and enable food supply chains with analytics and data driven insights.

Through proprietary technology and patented business processes, Where Food Comes From estimates that it supports more than 17,500 farmers, ranchers, processors, retailers, distributors, consumer brands, trade associations, restaurants, vineyards and wineries with a variety of value-added services.

For more information, visit www.wherethefoodcomesfrom.com.

PERSONNEL

Molly Pelzer To Step Down As Midwest Dairy CEO In March

St. Paul, MN—Midwest Dairy CEO Molly Pelzer announced Wednesday plans to retire from the organization after 40 years of service, effective March 2024.

Midwest Dairy has retained a search firm to lead the selection process for its next CEO.

Pelzer started her career with Midwest Dairy as a program director working with schools and health care professionals in 1984. Since then, she has held numerous leadership positions before taking the helm as CEO in 2019.

Prior to Midwest Dairy, Pelzer worked with the Midland Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc., both former checkoff organizations that are now part of the Midwest Dairy organization.

"Molly has contributed almost 40 years of experience to the dairy checkoff, and her achievements will be celebrated," said Charles Krause, corporate board chair of Midwest Dairy.

Pelzer is the third CEO in Midwest Dairy's 23-year history. Through her leadership, Pelzer provided strategic guidance to a staff of more than 55 employees.

"Over my time at Midwest Dairy, I have seen checkoff strategies evolve and foster new ideas that make a difference for dairy farm families," Pelzer said. "It's been a privilege to work for dairy farmers in each of my roles in dairy checkoff, and I will continue to be a dairy advocate in my retirement."

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the names of individuals who will hold senior staff positions in Washington, DC. BETSY DIRKSEN LONDRIGAN, who has over 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector, has been appointed administrator for the Rural Business-Cooperative Service. She previously served as USDA's rural development state director for Illinois since January 2022, and will take on this new role in mid-January upon the departure of KARAMA NEAL. MICHAEL WATSON has been named administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Watson has served as associate administrator of APHIS since 2018. GEORGETTE FURUKAWA has been appointed chief of staff for the Agricultural Marketing Service. Most recently, Furukawa served at the White House as an advisor to the Asian American, Native

Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA & NHPI) team in the Office of the Chief of Staff. JAYME HOLLIDAY has been appointed senior advisor for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services. KEVIN SHEA has been named senior advisor in the Office of the Deputy Secretary. Since 2013, Shea has served as administrator of APHIS. SARAH DIETCH has been appointed chief of staff for Rural Development. Dietch comes to USDA from the United States Peace Corps, where she served as director of Peace Corps Response.

CARLOS QUINTERO has joined the Association for Packaging & Processing Technologies (PMMI) as director of industry services, responsible for leading the OpX Leadership Network and other industry service initiatives. Quintero comes to PMMI with over 20 years of experience in packaging, processing, capital equipment, and intelligent supply chain technology. Before joining PMMI, Quintero held leadership roles with companies like SACMI Beverage, Optel Group, Sidel, FILTEC and HEUFT.

The Dairy Council of California (DCC) announced the addition of four new board members, which include LAURA BOSCH, Bosch Dairy Farms; JUSTIN LEYENDEKKER, Hoppy Cows Dairy; MICHAEL OOSTEN, Marvo Holsteins; and PAULINE TJAARDA, Tjaarda Dairy. Four board members representing dairy processors were reappointed, including STACY HEATON, California Dairies, Inc.; DENNIS ROBERTS, Crystal Creamery; PATRICK SCHALLBERGER, Hollandia Dairy; and RICHARD SHEHADEY, Producers Dairy.

Dutch-based dairy software company Connecterra has hired KAIA RAUEN as customer success manager, responsible for helping dairy farmers, advisors and dairy company clients across the US best utilize the product. Rauen brings years of software experience to her new role, with previous technical and product support roles for dairy companies like GEA Farm Technologies and BouMatic, LLC. In her most recent position at BouMatic, Rauen supported the software product network in North America, Asia and Australia with trainings and education. She also played an important role in gathering user feedback.

To include your personnel or company news, email Moira at mcrowley@cheesereporter.com for more details.



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NE-DBIC Accepting Applications For On-Farm Milk Storage, Handling Grants Thru Jan. 18

Montpelier, VT—The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) has announced the availability of funds through the On-Farm Milk Storage and Handling Grant program.

The application deadline is Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024. Grants are available to applicants in all 11 Northeast states: New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Rhode Island.

The NE-DBIC's On-Farm Milk Storage and Handling Grant program will support the needs of farmers to meet processor hauling and quality demands and for farmer-processors to be able to improve and expand their own movement of milk for increased operational efficiencies and cost savings.

This grant provides farmers with the opportunity to purchase new, energy efficient bulk tanks, milk cooling equipment, direct load systems and other pre-approved equipment, to ensure that they are ready and able to meet processor hauling and quality demands.

Funds will be available to farms at all scales who can demonstrate the need to move toward increased capacity and/or improved handling capabilities. Improvements made with this grant funding should be part of a plan to support long-term business success.

Project approaches should address at least two of the following funding priority areas:

- Project allows a farm to move from daily milk pickup to every-other-day milk pickup
- Project reduces time and labor it takes to move milk onto the truck, making milk pickup easier
- Project will reduce costs related to fuel, hauling charges, and energy use to farmer and processor
- Project will increase energy efficiencies on the farm
- Project improves food safety measures and milk quality, reducing the risk of farmer or processor needing to dump milk
- For farmers who process their own milk, project increases farm storage to allow for larger batch sizes
- Project increases milk transfer efficiencies by reducing milk handling

For more information, contact Ali Boochever, grants coordinator, at Ali.Boochever@vermont.gov; phone (802) 261-5740; or visit nedairyinnovation.com.

Australia's Imports

(Continued from p. 1)

half of all imported dairy (by volume), with tonnages rising even through the peak years for Australian milk production in the 1990s.

These days, the volume of cheese imports is much higher but the category represents closer to 30 percent of imported dairy, with butter, whole milk powder, ice cream, and mixtures occupying prominent spots among the rest, the report explained. Australia has generally produced more dairy than it needs; however, in the instance of casein (of which Australia is no longer a significant producer), the vast majority of requirements are imported.

The diverse nature of Australian dairy manufacturing and lack of significant category level gaps in local production has meant that imported products have served a host of purposes over time, the report continued. Mainly utilized in the foodservice and ingredient sectors, overseas product has traditionally been purchased for provenance marketing and/or to cut costs in low-margin applications such as fast food.

The former has been a major drawcard for increased offerings of imported dairy on the supermarket shelves, but the latter has been a significant consideration, especially in volume terms.

In 2022/23, close to 344,000 tons (759 million pounds) of dairy was shipped into Australia, largely from New Zealand, the US and Europe — the largest volume ever imported in a single season.

The price difference between Australian and New Zealand dairy products was at an all-time high, in conjunction with wide-

spread inflation ramping up cost pressures for both buyers and producers. This led to a 28.8 percent rise in dairy imports from New Zealand and a 16.1 percent increase in product from the US over 2022/23, bringing in significantly more cheese, butter and whole milk powder.

According to figures from the US Department of Agriculture, US dairy exports to Australia have increased in value from \$7.2 million in 2000 to a record \$216.0 million in 2022. Cheese exports accounted for over half (about 57 percent) of that value in 2022.

US cheese exports to Australia have risen from under 1.0 million pounds as recently as 2006 to 63.3 million pounds in 2022, USDA figures show.

Imported product accounted for over 40 percent of the Australian butter market by volume last season, most of which originated from New Zealand, the Dairy Australia report noted. Over the last decade, periods where the Australian butter export premium against New Zealand has risen have often been followed by increased of New Zealand butter into Australia.

Last season's drop in national milk supply, and much less favorable returns on the export market led to Australia being a net importer of milkfats for the second time, the first being in 2019/20, when there was also a significant price difference between Australian and international product.

Overall, Australia remains a net exporter of dairy (very much so in the case of protein-based products), the report pointed out.

Nonetheless, the rise of imported dairy products has meant the Australian population has been gradually consuming-

more imported dairy over time. In 1999/2000, imports accounted for 11 percent of Australian dairy consumption, whereas last season, 27 percent of dairy consumed was from overseas.

It's no secret that the major Australian retailers have capitalized on cheaper imports in almost all food categories and consumers in today's market are spending their money cautiously, the report said. Recent data has shown that products made with 100 percent Australian ingredients, and those marketed as made in Australia, are the second and third rated benefits amongst consumers.

But the Australian processing sector is navigating a "tough period," which faces a "complex web" of challenges, according to the Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF). While there is potential for long-term growth and sustainability, immediate concerns and regulatory constraints need addressing to secure the dairy industry's future and to keep dairy manufacturing local.

The ADPF listed several challenges being faced by processors:

- Record low milk supply, which causes heightened competition and increased farmgate prices.
- Raw milk prices: The cost of raw milk, the biggest input cost, surged by 30 percent.
- Rising input costs: processors face significant increases in input costs, including labor, transportation, packaging, and energy.
- Global market dynamics: A softening market has reduced export volumes by 16 percent.
- Adverse policy environment: The Dairy Code of Conduct has inadvertently created a rigid pricing structure that hampers the ability of dairy processors to respond to market fluctuations.

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2024 Food Trends

(Continued from p. 1)

Association's top 10 trends for 2024 is Grilled/Cooked Cheeses, including Provoleta, Queso Fundido, Raclette, Halloumi, and Juustolepia.

"Melty" cheese dishes are popular comfort foods, and are a way to experience international specialties, the Association reported. Many of these cheesy dishes are intended for group preparation and consumption – entertainment, communal connection, and comfort all in one.

"This year's trends are dominated by consumer craving for comfort and community, with a healthy side of curiosity influenced by social media," said Hudson Riehle, senior vice president of research, National Restaurant Association.

The practice of cultivating connections through food is listed in Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin's (DFW) 2024 Cheese Trends report.

A recent survey found that 92 percent of consumers value experiences over physical gifts, with food-related experiences remaining a top category.

Other DFW consumer behavior trends include creating the "at-home culinary haven" with about 30 percent of consumers eating elevated home-cooked meals; savoring small treats, including traditional and nostalgic foods; and a focus on sustainability.

The trend towards embracing small plates – particularly snacking cheeses – was likewise noted by FreshDirect in its top five food trends for 2024.

Premium snacking cheeses and specialty dips have been huge growth drivers this past year, and

will continue to gain popularity as more consumers embrace the versatility and quick preparation of appetizers and small plates, FreshDirect reported.

The "little indulgence" trend was also reported by Lyons Magnus. The coming year will see a proliferation of mini treats like tiny milkshakes and two-bite brownies, which offer self-indulgent, bite-sized, low-cost rewards.

The Tillamook County Creamery Association (TCCA) launched its first-ever dairy trends roundup for 2024, featuring the top five trends from its "Predict the Yum" Taskforce:

■ **The Cheddar Plunge** – With shoppers relying more and more on grocery delivery, people are buying one type of cheese and serving it up in a variety of different ways. Examples include soaking a sharp Cheddar in wine or ale for two or three days.

■ **Burgers, Burgers and More Burgers** – The popularity of "smash burgers," made with unique and specialty ingredients, has increased by almost 70 percent over the past year. Diners are paying about \$2 more for these "elevated" burgers," most of which feature specialty cheeses.

■ **Air Fryers Stay Hot** – Nearly 60 percent of households own an air fryer, and consumers are looking for new ways to elevate classic recipes using the appliance. Examples include air fryer grilled cheese, jalapeno poppers and nachos.

■ **Cheese, Spice and Everything Nice** – New cheese pairings feature bold, spicy flavors with a global influence.

■ **Amaro, Amazing** – Amaro, the name for a wide variety of herb-infused Italian liqueurs, has grown over 21 percent in social

discussions over the past year, TCCA reported. Amaro is typically served at the end of a meal as a digestif, and pairs nicely with cheese.

Datassential food market research company released its 10th annual list of food and flavor trend predictions, with sweetened condensed milk among the top 10 flavors for 2024.

Scarmoza cheese is among 10 flavors in Datassential's Menu Adoption Cycle, predicting growth beyond the coming year.

At least 70 percent of US consumers indicate that their food preferences are driven primarily by what they encounter on restaurant menus – more so than what they find on grocery store shelves or in a recipe book, Datassential reported.

Despite the fact that most meals are consumed at home, trends are generally catalyzed by consumers' away-from-home experiences.

The popularity of probiotic functional dairy foods like yogurt and kefir holds steady for another year, with whey-based tonics set to outpace kombucha as the favored digestive well-being beverage, FreshDirect added.

Less Food Waste, More Value At Checkout, More Sustainability

The importance and practice of sustainability – a trend noted over a decade ago – continues to be a top priority within the contemporary food landscape.

As customers look for ways to make a positive impact through their grocery choices, they seek to support sustainable practices in as many ways as possible, FreshDirect noted.

In 2024, that will mean purchasing food made with usable food scraps, or upcycling.

Lyons Magnus stressed the importance of more consumers seeking better value at checkout, as 2023 ends and 2024 begins.

"Consumers who are uncertain about the future of the economy will be dining out less, eating in more, and exploring more channels across the food category," noted John Koch, vice president, national accounts, Lyons Magus.

Shoppers will explore alternative sources, like convenience stores, and new brands of restaurants to stretch their food and dining dollars.

Operators will be cautious about future price increases, scrutinizing all costs and marketing creative new meal deals, bundles and value offers.

To that end, the industry can also expect to see mobile, app-based ordering/pick-up increasingly steal share from third party home delivery in 2024, Lyons Magnus noted.

Consumers benefit by skipping high delivery fees, driver tips and paying in-restaurant menu prices.

Acosta Group announced its 2024 retail predictions, showing how brands and retailers can put these trends into practice.

■ **Seamless shopping requires digital upgrades.** Retailers and brands need to offer seamless shopping – anywhere, anytime, for anything. Retailers will continue investing in both store and digital upgrades to meet shopper demands.

■ **Use of AI can enhance shopping experience.** The most successful applications of AI will give shoppers with an enhanced, more customized shopping experience. Gen Z is most comfortable with retailers using AI to improve their shopping experience via personalized rewards/recommendations.

■ **Shoppers prioritize what's NOT in their foods.** The acceleration of the clean label trend in US food was sparked by the passing of The California Food Safety Act of 2023, which takes effect in January 2027, Acosta reported.

The act bans four chemicals, and companies will be required to switch to ingredients now used in the EU and elsewhere.

About 41 percent of consumers have heard of clean label, and 78 percent find it appealing. This will move natural and organic shoppers' values more mainstream.

■ **Blurring the line between retail and foodservice.** There will be more competition for shopper meals in the coming year, further blurring the lines between foodservice and retail.

Grocers and convenience store operators will have the opportunity to expand made-to-order meals to attract cost-conscious shoppers who want restaurant quality food anytime, anywhere.

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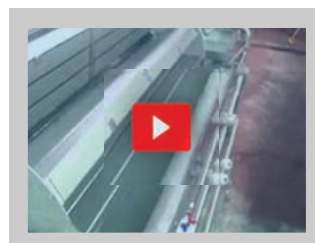
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CDFA Awards Over \$19 Million To Support GHG Cuts At Dairies

Sacramento, CA—The California Department of Food and Agriculture’s (CDFA) Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation (OEFI) and the California Dairy Research Foundation (CDRF) announced the awarding of \$15.65 million in grant funding to 11 projects in the Dairy Digester Research and Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP) and \$3.74 million in grant funding to three projects in the Dairy Plus Program.

The DDRDP incentivizes anaerobic digesters in California operations to reduce methane created by cow manure. Anaerobic digesters capture methane from waste, transforming it into renewable energy, like electricity, renewable natural gas, and hydrogen.

The Dairy Plus Program, a new complementary program for the DDRDP and OEFI’s Alternative Manure Management Program, is a collaboration between CDFA, CDRF, and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) as part of the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities grant, which focuses on large-scale projects for improved water quality and nutrient management in addition to methane reduction.

Incentivized practices include filtration of digested manure using worms (vermifiltration) and coagulation of fine-digested manure solids (advanced solid-liquid separation assisted by flocculants) that can help capture nitrogen and keep more manure out of a liquid environment.

“The DDRDP continues to be a productive and cost-effective program to reduce GHGs,” announced Michael Boccadoro, executive director of Dairy Cares, an organization of California dairy farmers.

The OEFI also recently announced the award of \$9.2 million in grant funding to six research projects under the Livestock Enteric Methane Emission Reduction Research Program (LEMER-RP).

These funds support research that evaluates additives and dietary modifications shown to reduce enteric methane emissions in the dairy and livestock sectors.

Record Retail Prices

(Continued from p. 1)

to a high of \$6.24 per gallon in December.

Kansas City was the only city that had an average retail whole milk price above \$6.00 per gallon in 2023. Retail whole milk prices averaged above \$5.00 per gallon in three other cities this year: Chicago, \$5.36 per gallon; New York City, \$5.03 per gallon; and Philadelphia, \$5.58 per gallon.

In Milwaukee, WI, retail whole milk prices this year averaged \$4.34 per gallon, exactly the same as the average for all 30 cities.

Also in 2023, the retail price for conventional reduced fat (2 percent) milk averaged a record \$4.29 per gallon, up eight cents from 2022’s previous record high.

As was the case with whole milk, retail reduced fat milk prices have now averaged above \$4.00 per gallon for two straight years.

Average retail prices for reduced fat milk ranged from a low of \$4.25 per gallon in August to a high of \$4.37 per gallon in January.

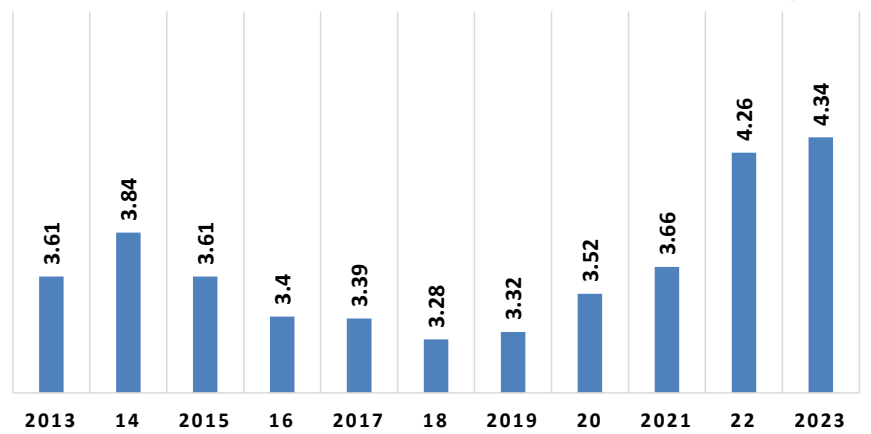
Louisville had the lowest average retail price for reduced fat milk in 2023, at \$2.94 per gallon, the same average retail price as it had for whole milk. Also as was the case with whole milk, Louisville was the only city or metro area with an average retail price under \$3.00 per gallon last year.

Retail reduced fat milk prices averaged under \$4.00 per gallon in six other cities this year: Cincinnati, \$3.41 per gallon; Dallas, \$3.63 per gallon; Detroit, \$3.79 per gallon; Houston, \$3.77 per gallon; Indianapolis, \$3.20 per gallon; and Syracuse, \$3.60 per gallon.

At the other extreme, Kansas City had the highest average retail

Average Retail Whole Milk Prices

2013 – 2023; Select Cities in federal order areas
Price per gallon



price for reduced fat milk, at \$5.64 per gallon. Three other cities had average retail reduced fat prices above \$5.00 per gallon last year: Chicago, \$5.39 per gallon; New York City, \$5.03 per gallon; and Philadelphia, \$5.29 per gallon.

Retail Organic Milk Prices

In 2023, the average retail price for organic whole milk was \$4.83 per half-gallon, up 25 cents from 2022’s record high.

Average retail prices for organic whole milk ranged from a low of \$4.79 per half-gallon in March and April to a high of \$4.88 per half-gallon in October.

Detroit had the lowest average retail price for organic whole milk this year, at \$3.98 per half-gallon.

Five other cities were just one cent higher, at \$3.99 per half-gallon: Cincinnati, Dallas, Houston, Louisville, Oklahoma City, and Wichita, KS.

At the other extreme, St. Louis, MO, had the highest average retail price for organic whole milk this year, at \$6.54 per half-gallon. Two other cities had average retail prices for organic whole milk above \$6.00 per half-gallon in 2023: Pittsburgh, \$6.48 per half-

gallon; and Portland, OR, \$6.14 per half-gallon.

As was also the case in 2022, the average retail price for organic reduced fat (2 percent) milk in 2023 was the same as for organic whole milk: \$4.83 per half-gallon. Average annual retail prices for organic whole milk and organic reduced fat milk have been identical every year since 2015.

Average retail prices for organic reduced fat ranged from a low of \$4.78 per half-gallon in February to a high of \$4.88 per half-gallon in both September and October.

As was the case for organic whole milk, Detroit in 2023 had the lowest average retail price for organic reduced fat milk, at \$3.98 per half-gallon. And the same five cities were just one cent higher, at \$3.99 per half-gallon.

At the other extreme, St. Louis this year also had the highest average retail price for organic reduced fat milk, at \$6.60 per half-gallon, six cents higher than its average retail price for organic whole milk. And the same two cities also had average retail prices for organic reduced fat milk above \$6.00 per half-gallon this year: Pittsburgh, \$6.48, and Portland, \$6.14.



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Dietary Guidelines Advisory Panel Sets January 19 Meeting

Washington—The USDA and Health and Human Services (HHS) have announced that the fourth meeting of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) will be held on Jan. 19.

The meeting will be accessible online via livestream and recorded for later viewing.

During the meeting, the DGAC will provide subcommittee updates, including presentations by each subcommittee, and deliberation by the full Committee regarding progress made since the third public meeting, including protocol development, evidence review and synthesis, draft conclusion statements, and plans for future Committee work.

For its review of the evidence, members of the DGAC are divided into four subcommittees and one cross-cutting working group based on their expertise related to the scientific questions prioritized by the Committee. Each subcommittee and working group will conduct its work between the public meetings and report on its work to the full Committee.

The four subcommittees are: “Dietary Patterns and Specific

Dietary Pattern Components Across Life Stages”; “Diet in Pregnancy and Birth through Adolescence”; “Food Pattern Modeling and Data Analysis”; and “Strategies for Individuals and Families Related to Diet Quality and Weight Management.”

The Committee is examining the evidence from a list of prioritized scientific questions, informed by a proposed list of scientific questions identified by HHS and USDA.

Each scientific question is addressed by one subcommittee; however, some topics (like dietary patterns) and populations (like older adults) are addressed in multiple questions and sometimes by more than one subcommittee. The Committee is working collectively across subcommittees as it examines the evidence in preparation for developing its report.

The upcoming meeting agenda will be announced in advance of the meeting on *DietaryGuidelines.gov*.

Written comments may be submitted at any time at *regulations.gov*; the document number is HHS-OASH-2022-0021-0001.

The History of the American Dairy Products Institute 1925 to 2022

MARY JANE CARLISLE, JR.

The History of the American Dairy Products Institute 1925 to 2022

by Mary Jane Carlisle, Jr.
2023, 323 pages, \$75 + Shipping and Handling

For a long time, there have been some members of the American Dairy Products Institute (ADPI) who have been meaning to write the history of this fine organization before the story gets lost.

Now, after months of collaboration with members, industry leaders and others, it's become a reality!

This book was written using ADPI records and minutes, and with the research materials from member's personal files. It offers a well-rounded picture of where it came from and how it got here from there.

“A perfect publication to show how folks with different ideas on how to utilize a product for profit (sometimes) can create an entire and broad industry!”, Mark Davis

For details: www.cheesereporter.com/HistoryofADPI.htm

USDA To Host Workshops On Livestock Risk Management Projects

Washington—The USDA is hosting more than a dozen in-person and virtual workshops in the first three months of 2024 for producers to learn about new and expanded livestock risk management products.

The “Livestock Roadshow,” hosted by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA), will highlight policy improvements based on feedback from US livestock producers, including dairy producers, as part of the agency's broader outreach and education efforts.

Producers attending the Livestock Roadshow events can expect to learn more about Dairy Revenue Protection (Dairy-RP), which is designed to insure against unexpected declines in the quarterly revenue from milk sales relative to a guaranteed coverage level; Livestock Gross Margin Insurance Plan for Dairy Cattle (LGM-Dairy), which provides protection when feed costs rise or milk prices drop; as well as Livestock Risk Protection; Annual Forage; Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage; and Weaned Calf Risk Protection.

To ensure livestock producers across the US can attend a

Livestock Roadshow event, two virtual livestock roadshows are scheduled for January; one will take place Jan. 8, beginning at noon Central time; and the other will take place Jan. 17, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Pacific time.

In-person sessions begin Wednesday, Jan. 10, in Lawton, OK, and continue through early March in various locations around the US.

“Listening to farmers and ranchers, learning about their needs, and using feedback to make improvements to risk management options is a top priority for Risk Management Agency,” said Marcia Bunger, RMA administrator.

“We are committed to expanding the reach of crop insurance, especially to producers who haven't previously participated,” Bunger continued.

Livestock producers, including dairy producers, can learn more about these workshops by visiting the Livestock Roadshow website, at <https://www.rma.usda.gov/Topics/Livestock-Roadshow>; or by contacting a RMA regional office.

PLANNING GUIDE

Winter Fancy Food Show: Jan. 21-23, Las Vegas Convention Center. www.specialtyfood.com.

Dairy Forum 2024: Jan. 21-24, J.W. Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge, www.idfa.org/dairy-forum.

World Championship Cheese Contest: March 5-7, Monona Terrace Convention Center, Madison. Visit www.worldchampioncheese.org for updates.

ADPI Global Ingredients Summit: March 11-13, 2024, Peppermill Resort, Reno. Visit www.adpi.org for information.

Cheese Expo: April 16-18, 2024, Baird Center, Milwaukee, WI. Registration now available online at www.cheeseexpo.org.

ADPI/ABI Joint Annual Conference: April 28-30, Sheraton Grand Chicago Riverwalk, Chicago, IL. For details, visit adpi.org/events for details.

American Cheese Society Annual Conference: July 10-13, Buffalo, NY. Visit www.cheesesociety.com.

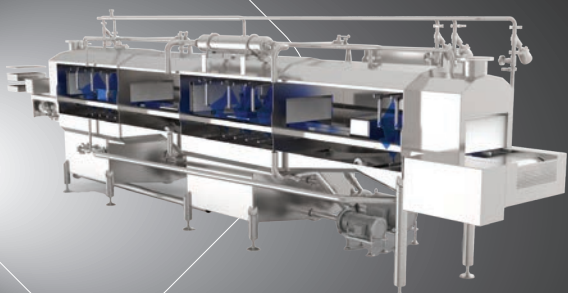
IMPA Annual Meeting: Aug. 8-9, Sun Valley Resort, Sun Valley, ID. Visit www.impa.us for details closer to event date.

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DAIRY PLANTS FOR SALE: <https://dairyassets.weebly.com/m--a.html>. Contact Jim at 608-835-7705; or by email at jimcisler7@gmail.com



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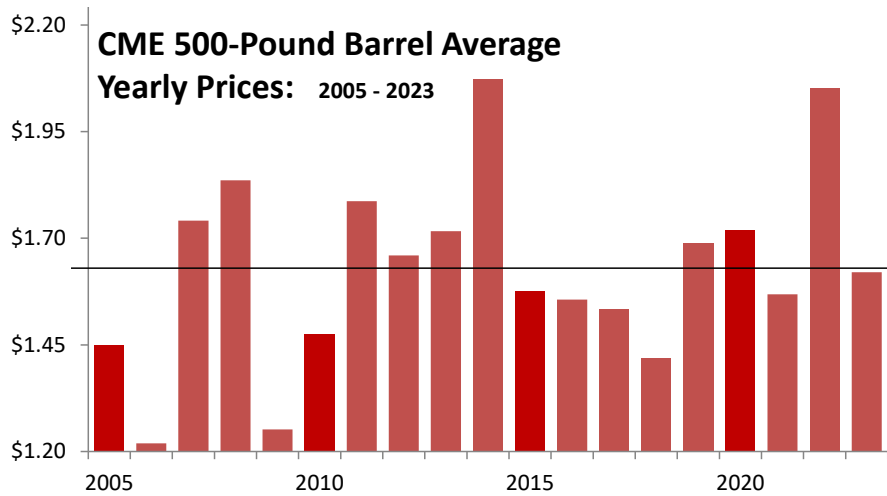
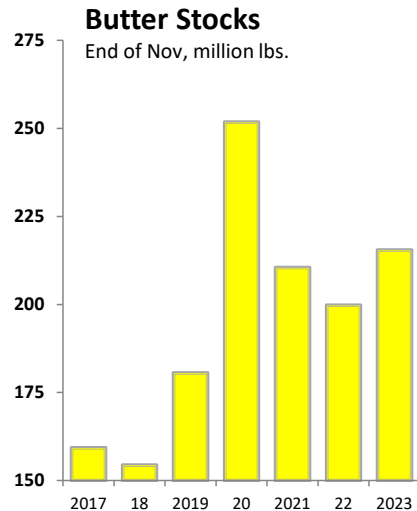
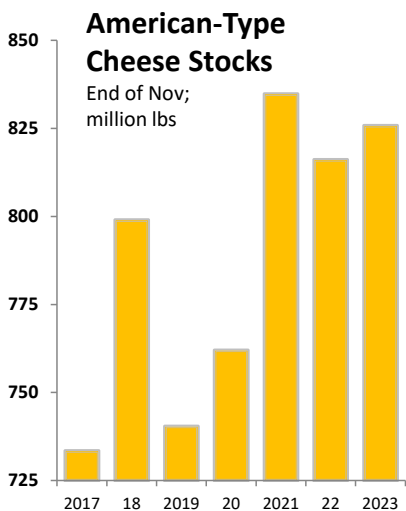
Dairy Product Stocks in Cold Storage

TOTAL STOCKS AS REPORTED BY USDA (in 1000s of pounds unless indicated)

	Stocks in All Warehouses			November 30, 2023 as a % of		Public Warehouse Stocks
	Nov 30 2022	Oct 31 2023	Nov 30 2023	Nov 30 2022	Oct 31 2023	Nov 30 2023
Butter	199,775	240,153	215,450	108	90	195,629
Cheese						
American	816,077	833,923	825,788	101	99	
Swiss	22,397	20,826	20,936	93	101	
Other	592,496	603,942	586,998	99	97	
Total	1,430,970	1,458,691	1,433,722	100	98	1,109,619

DAIRY FUTURES PRICES

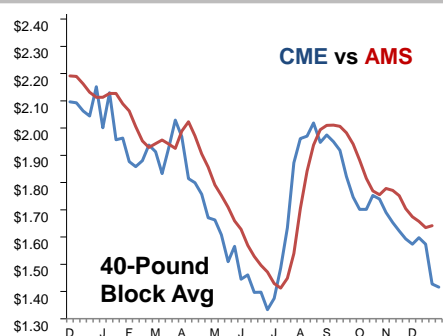
SETTLING PRICE				*Cash Settled				
Date	Month	Class III	Class IV	Dry Whey	NDM	Block Cheese	Cheese*	Butter*
12-22	Dec 23	16.09	19.14	41.350	119.250	1.6500	1.6280	262.000
12-25	Dec 23							
12-26	Dec 23	16.10	19.14	41.500	119.250	1.6500	1.6290	262.000
12-27	Dec 23	16.12	19.14	41.500	119.200	1.6500	1.6310	262.000
12-28	Dec 23	16.11	19.14	41.500	119.200	1.6500	1.6310	262.000
12-22	Jan 24	15.43	18.82	41.000	120.525	1.6000	1.5680	252.500
12-25	Jan 24							
12-26	Jan 24	15.54	18.82	41.025	120.525	1.5620	1.5740	253.000
12-27	Jan 24	15.69	19.10	41.500	120.500	1.5750	1.5920	259.000
12-28	Jan 24	15.40	19.10	41.500	120.500	1.5460	1.5610	259.500
12-22	Feb 24	15.60	18.97	41.250	120.000	1.6440	1.5870	252.225
12-25	Feb 24							
12-26	Feb 24	15.73	18.97	41.250	119.300	1.6440	1.6000	252.250
12-27	Feb 24	15.89	18.97	41.200	119.425	1.6440	1.6200	255.500
12-28	Feb 24	15.69	18.97	41.000	120.425	1.6210	1.6050	257.000
12-22	Mar 24	16.27	19.02	41.750	121.175	1.7000	1.6610	254.025
12-25	Mar 24							
12-26	Mar 24	16.36	19.02	41.500	121.175	1.6880	1.6690	256.800
12-27	Mar 24	16.47	19.02	41.500	121.275	1.6880	1.6730	257.000
12-28	Mar 24	16.35	19.10	41.000	121.275	1.6880	1.6610	258.000
12-22	April 24	17.21	19.18	43.000	124.275	1.7800	1.7470	257.750
12-25	April 24							
12-26	April 24	17.22	19.22	43.000	124.000	1.7800	1.7440	258.000
12-27	April 24	17.25	19.35	43.000	123.500	1.7800	1.7560	259.000
12-28	April 24	17.16	19.25	43.000	123.500	1.7790	1.7430	258.750
12-22	May 24	17.85	19.42	44.100	125.575	1.8400	1.8040	257.500
12-25	May 24							
12-26	May 24	17.85	19.43	44.100	125.500	1.8300	1.8040	257.550
12-27	May 24	17.97	19.50	44.100	125.250	1.8350	1.8140	260.750
12-28	May 24	17.90	19.52	43.900	125.475	1.8350	1.8140	260.000
12-22	June 24	18.18	19.68	45.000	127.925	1.8270	1.8450	258.025
12-25	June 24							
12-26	June 24	18.22	19.68	45.000	127.500	1.8270	1.8460	258.550
12-27	June 24	18.25	19.73	45.000	127.775	1.8320	1.8500	261.000
12-28	June 24	18.30	19.76	45.000	127.775	1.8600	1.8540	261.000
12-22	July 24	18.30	19.74	47.400	130.100	1.8630	1.8660	258.025
12-25	July 24							
12-26	July 24	18.35	19.70	47.400	129.700	1.8630	1.8680	258.025
12-27	July 24	18.43	19.84	47.400	129.700	1.8740	1.8800	261.000
12-28	July 24	18.45	19.87	47.400	129.700	1.8850	1.8820	261.900
12-22	Aug 24	18.39	19.80	47.400	132.000	1.8770	1.8840	259.000
12-25	Aug 24							
12-26	Aug 24	18.49	19.84	47.400	132.000	1.8790	1.8880	259.000
12-27	Aug 24	18.50	19.85	47.400	132.000	1.8860	1.8940	259.000
12-28	Aug 24	18.48	20.00	47.400	131.000	1.8900	1.8980	261.000
12-22	Sept 24	18.50	20.00	47.500	133.000	1.9290	1.8930	258.000
12-25	Sept 24							
12-26	Sept 24	18.50	20.09	47.500	133.000	1.9290	1.8960	258.000
12-27	Sept 24	18.60	20.18	47.500	133.000	1.9290	1.9030	260.000
12-28	Sept 24	18.63	20.18	47.500	133.000	1.9290	1.9060	261.000
12-22	Oct 24	18.47	20.02	47.000	134.000	1.9420	1.8960	257.000
12-25	Oct 24							
12-26	Oct 24	18.60	19.94	47.000	133.775	1.9420	1.8960	257.000
12-27	Oct 24	18.69	20.04	47.000	132.925	1.9420	1.9010	258.000
12-28	Oct 24	18.65	20.00	47.000	133.000	1.9420	1.9050	261.000
Dec. 28	28,273	8,579	3,408	9,321	2,663	21,066	9,774	



DAIRY PRODUCT SALES

Dec. 20, 2023—AMS' National Dairy Products Sales Report. Prices included are provided each week by manufacturers. Prices collected are for the (wholesale) point of sale for natural, unaged Cheddar; boxes of butter meeting USDA standards; Extra Grade edible dry whey; and Extra Grade and USPH Grade A nonfortified NFDM.

•Revised



Week Ending	Dec. 23	Dec. 16	Dec. 9	Dec. 2
40-Pound Block Cheddar Cheese Prices and Sales				
Weighted Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	1.6418	1.6349	1.6578	1.6740
Sales Volume	Pounds			
US	12,307,052	12,196,722	8,746,012	12,672,481
500-Pound Barrel Cheddar Cheese Prices, Sales & Moisture Content				
Weighted Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	1.6592	1.6694	1.6590	1.7105
Adjusted to 38% Moisture				
US	1.5785	1.5863	1.5739	1.6255
Sales Volume	Pounds			
US	14,025,749	13,388,526	14,441,861	15,282,604
Weighted Moisture Content	Percent			
US	34.83	34.75	34.65	34.76
AA Butter				
Weighted Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	2.6097	2.6959	2.6206	2.6235
Sales Volume	Pounds			
US	3,069,743	3,232,884	3,098,542	3,874,697
Extra Grade Dry Whey Prices				
Weighted Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	0.4201	0.4188	0.4183	0.4123
Sales Volume	Pounds			
US	4,775,165	5,602,716	6,633,045	5,337,697
Extra Grade or USPHS Grade A Nonfat Dry Milk				
Average Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	1.1932	1.1998	1.2136	1.1960
Sales Volume	Pounds			
US	18,287,905	17,501,705	17,728,918	18,218,887

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DAIRY PRODUCT MARKETS

AS REPORTED BY THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WHOLESALE CHEESE MARKETS

NATIONAL - DEC. 22: Milk volumes available for cheese manufacturing remain strong in the Northeast. Plant downtime scheduled for end-of-year holidays will slow production in the coming weeks. Cream cheese demand has been strong for holiday baking, and both cheddar and mozzarella demands are steady. In the Central region, milk is available for cheese processing, but not in as strong supply as in years past. Contacts report some below Class spot milk prices, but suggest flat market and above Class prices are also present. Cheese inventories are balanced in the Midwestern states. Western cheese inventories are comfortable, though spot loads of cheese vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. Contacts share there are strong milk quantities available for production. Retail demand is steady. Foodservice demand is noted to be weaker in the West.

NORTHEAST - DEC. 27: There are ample milk supplies available as bottling orders have been paused due to holidays. Plant managers relay steady production schedules. Discarding of milk supplies was avoided due to processors balancing milk volumes. Cheddar and Mozz continue to be the most in-demand cheeses. Retail demand is steady. Foodservice demand is unchanged. Contacts note block inventories are growing quickly.

MIDWEST AREA - DEC. 27: A number of cheese plants are running light holiday schedules, which has kept milk handlers very busy and put strong pressure on spot milk prices this holiday season. Reported spot milk prices, at report time, are from \$8 to \$2 under Class III. Contacts are expecting an abrupt shift next week, as bottling plants and other operations begin to clear more milk, but this week has provided operational cheesemakers with plentiful milk volumes. Cheese demand is quieter seasonally, according to most Midwest contacts. With extra milk, some say cheese inventories could build somewhat over the next week(s), particularly when more cheese operations return from holiday downtime. Cheese market tones are and have been under some bearish pressure.

WEST - DEC. 27: Milk processors in the West report plentiful milk volumes. Due to plant downtime for holidays, bottling orders have stalled and processors have taken on additional milk volumes. Inventories continue to grow. Contacts predict that as manufacturing of other dairy products restarts in the New Year, cheese inventories will become more balanced. Final retail pushes of the year are strong. Foodservice demand remains weak, but contacts predict that will change because of football championships on the horizon.

FOREIGN -TYPE CHEESE - DEC. 27: Milk output is trending higher in Europe, but industry sources indicate volumes are down compared to one year ago. Milk is available for cheesemaking, but contacts report lighter cheese production due to the end of year holidays. The holidays are also having a negative impact on demand for cheese in Europe, as stakeholders say retail and food service demands for cheese have softened somewhat. International cheese sales have taken a step back this week. Contacts say they anticipate a few weeks of lighter cheese demand will allow cheesemakers to replenish tight warehouse inventories. Some stakeholders suggest strong demand following the holidays will keep inventories somewhat tight in January.

OCEANIC CHEDDAR - DEC 21: Cheddar prices pushed higher. Cheddar production is steady, following seasonal trends in Oceania. Production data released by Dairy Australia showed that cheese production in Australia was down in October year over year. This data also illustrated a decline in cheese production from the start of the production season in July through October of this year compared to the same period of 2022. Recently released export data from Australia shows an increase in exports for cheese from July through October of this year, compared to one year ago.

EEX Weekly European Cheese Indices (WECI): Price Per/lb (US Converted)

Variety	Date:	12/20	12/13	Variety	Date:	12/20	12/13
Cheddar Curd		\$2.07	\$2.05	Mild Cheddar		\$2.07	\$2.03
Young Gouda		\$2.02	\$2.02	Mozzarella		\$1.85	\$1.85

WHOLESALE BUTTER MARKETS - DECEMBER 27

NATIONAL: Retail butter demand is mixed, with some stakeholders reporting holiday ordering is largely fulfilled and other stakeholders reporting buyers eagerly seeking to fill remaining holiday needs. Food service demand is solid. Cream supplies for churning are readily available throughout the country. Cream demand is mixed. Manufacturers in the western and central regions indicate cream demand is strong to steady, while contacts in the eastern region report steady to lighter cream demand. Butter makers are running active production schedules utilizing increased spot load availability of cream. Manufacturers in the west region indicate availability of bulk and unsalted butter is somewhat looser.

CENTRAL: Market prices are holding firm. Cream is abundant. Outside of expected holiday downtime at Class II and III plants, some of the reason for the abundance is that there is more plant downtime at the Class IV level this year. Cream trucks are reportedly being rerouted in some cases, which has put pressure on cream handlers. Cream multiples are moving into holiday territory, as some have been reported as low as .5 in the Midwest. Some Midwestern plant managers say they are at or near capacity and are forced to turn offers away.

NORTHEAST: Butter plant managers relay some plant downtime as well as lighter production schedules due to the December holidays. Cream supplies are

plentiful, and multiples have plummeted below the flat market line. Contacts share retail demand remains strong heading into the New Year, signaling the last push for holiday baking demand. Foodservice demand remains light. Both unsalted and salted butter inventories are noted to be comfortable to lighter Tuesday.

WEST: There are ample cream supplies available for processing in the West. Contacts relay milk components are stronger this month than they were in December 2022. Contacts share that it has been difficult to find homes for spot loads of cream, and multiples continue to be below the flat market. Plant managers report some downtime for the holidays, while other processors report running minimal production schedules. Retail demand remains steady, and inventories are more balanced than they are in other regions of the US.

OCEANIA: Butter prices moved higher in Oceania, on both ends of the range, during the current reporting period. Butter production is following seasonal trends in Oceania. Production data for Australia released by Dairy Australia showed butter production in October was up compared to a year ago. Production from the start of the season in July through October was down compared to a year ago. Export data in Australia showed a decline in both butter and butter oil exports from the start of the 2023 production season.

NATIONAL - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY PRODUCTS

Conventional flavored milk in half gallon containers saw the largest growth, appearing in 346 percent more ads than in Week 51. Half gallons of conventional flavored milk have a weighted average advertised price of \$2.72 this week. Total ads for both conventional and organic cheese increased. Shred style cheese in 6-8-ounce packages was the most advertised conventional cheese item this week, despite appearing in 24 percent fewer ads than last week. The weighted average advertised price for this item was \$2.26. Ads for organic shred style cheese in 6-8-ounce packages grew by 96 percent from last week's survey, while the weighted average advertised price declined by 48 cents to \$4.26. The organic premium for 6-8-ounce organic shred style cheese is \$2.00. Conventional yogurt ads increased by 116 percent. Last week's most advertised conventional yogurt item was Greek yogurt in 4-6-ounce containers, but it fell to second this week after conventional Greek yogurt in 32-ounce containers increased ad numbers by 131 percent.

RETAIL PRICES - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY - DECEMBER 22

Commodity	US	NE	SE	MID	SC	SW	NW
Butter 8 oz	3.45	4.49	3.00		3.81		
Butter 1#	4.80	4.16	5.13	4.29	4.58	4.78	5.25
Cheese 6-8 oz block	2.76	2.53	3.21	2.55	2.35	3.16	2.00
Cheese 6-8 oz shred	2.26	2.05	2.44	2.05	2.27	2.29	1.70
Cheese 6-8 oz sliced	2.92	2.46	3.21	2.44	2.73	2.81	2.00
Cheese 1# block	5.13	4.61	5.59	3.50	2.97	4.08	
Cheese 1# shred	3.99	3.99	3.92	3.50	4.79	4.74	
Cheese 1# sliced	4.48		4.66	3.50			
Cheese 2# block	10.02			6.97	12.48	6.33	7.99
Cheese 2# shred	7.29		7.48	7.53	7.48	6.39	
Cottage Cheese 16 oz	2.99	2.72	3.07		2.49	2.99	2.50
Cottage Cheese 24 oz	3.32		3.24	3.99	3.37	2.99	
Cream Cheese 8 oz	2.32	2.62	2.21	2.34	2.21	2.77	2.74
Milk ½ gallon	1.88		1.77	2.85	1.82	2.24	1.38
Milk gallon	3.15	3.76	3.23	2.66	2.87	3.50	
Ice Cream 14-16 oz	3.17	3.52	1.62	3.97	3.76	3.35	2.99
Ice Cream 48-64 oz	4.13	3.44	3.98	3.83	5.10	3.64	3.40
Flavored Milk ½ gallon	2.72	3.19	2.97		2.70	1.97	1.27
Flavored Milk gallon	3.69		3.99		3.03		
Sour Cream 16 oz	2.31	2.30	2.27	2.23	2.49	2.29	2.09
Sour Cream 24 oz	3.07		3.07	3.99	3.02	3.20	
Yogurt (Greek) 4-6 oz	1.12	1.21	1.10	1.00	1.18	1.00	1.05
Yogurt (Greek) 32 oz	5.43	5.28	5.43	7.73	4.86	5.66	
Yogurt 4-6 oz	0.65	0.60		0.49	0.71		0.49
Yogurt 32 oz	2.48	3.37	2.36	2.07	2.32	2.62	

ORGANIC DAIRY - RETAIL OVERVIEW

National Weighted Retail Avg Price:			
Butter 8 oz:	\$4.37	Ice Cream 14 - 16 oz	\$
Butter 1 lb:		Ice Cream 48-64 oz	\$8.99
Cheese 6-8 oz block:		Milk ½ gallon:	\$4.44
Cheese 6-8 oz shred:	\$4.26	Milk gallon:	\$7.89
Cheese 6-8 oz sliced:	\$3.00	Sour Cream 16 oz:	\$4.49
Cheese 2 lb shred:		Yogurt 4-6 oz:	
Cottage Cheese 16 oz:	\$5.21	Greek Yogurt 4-6 oz:	
Cream Cheese 8 oz:	\$3.87	Yogurt 32 oz:	
		Yogurt Greek 32 oz	\$7.19

DRY DAIRY PRODUCTS - DECEMBER 28

WPC CENTRAL/WEST: Interest in WPC 34% has waned this week, as contacts say the end of year holidays have kept spot market activity somewhat quiet. Purchasers note WPC 34% spot inventories for some preferred brands are tight and say they are having to pay higher prices to obtain loads. Meanwhile, interchangeable loads of WPC 34% are available for purchasing. Market conditions for WPC 80% and WPI remain bullish as contacts say inventories are very tight and demand remains strong. Due to this, plant managers say they are focusing their schedules on these commodities, thus limiting WPC 34% production.

LACTOSE CENTRAL/WEST: Demand from lactose is steady from contract purchasers. Stakeholders note light spot market activity and cite the end of year holidays as contributing to a decline in sales. Some contacts say they are offering loads priced near the bottom of the range to purchasers in international markets amid soft export demand. Generally, spot loads are available, but inventories of loads which meet

more stringent requirements are reportedly difficult to obtain.

DRY WHEY-CENTRAL: Market tones have caught some slightly bullish traction in recent weeks, as availability has held somewhat snug in the region. High protein blends, such as WPC 80% and WPI, are garnering more attention from end users and processors in recent months, and processing has shifted into those varieties. Animal feed whey trading was quiet, and prices are holding steady.

DRY WHEY-NE: The East dry whey price dipped slightly at both ends of the range. Contacts share that due to lighter Class I orders and plant downtime, cheese processors have taken on additional spot loads of milk for manufacturing. In the Northeast, cheese production schedules are steady to stronger, and condensed whey is more available than in recent weeks. Drying activity is able to match the rate of liquid whey production and replenish inventories that have been tight in recent weeks.

WEEKLY COLD STORAGE HOLDINGS

SELECTED STORAGE CENTERS IN 1,000 POUNDS - INCLUDING GOVERNMENT

DATE	BUTTER	CHEESE
12/25/23	31,275	81,230
12/01/23	32,368	82,019
Change	-1,093	-789
Percent Change	-3	-1

CME CASH PRICES - DECEMBER 25 - 29, 2023

Visit www.cheesereporter.com for daily prices

	500-LB CHEDDAR	40-LB CHEDDAR	AA BUTTER	GRADE A NFDM	DRY WHEY
MONDAY December 25	NO TRADING	NO TRADING	NO TRADING	NO TRADING	NO TRADING
TUESDAY December 26	\$1.4250 (+3¼)	\$1.3900 (NC)	\$2.5425 (+¼)	\$1.1600 (NC)	\$0.3800 (NC)
WEDNESDAY December 27	\$1.4700 (+4½)	\$1.4150 (+2½)	\$2.6225 (+8)	\$1.1650 (+½)	\$0.3850 (+½)
THURSDAY December 28	\$1.4300 (-4)	\$1.4300 (+1½)	\$2.6600 (+3¾)	\$1.1650 (NC)	\$0.3850 (NC)
FRIDAY December 29	\$1.4000 (-3)	\$1.4700 (+4)	\$2.6650 (+¼)	\$1.1700 (+½)	\$0.3850 (NC)
Week's AVG \$ Change	\$1.4313 (+0.0333)	\$1.4263 (-0.0017)	\$2.6225 (+0.0430)	\$1.1650 (+0.0045)	\$0.3838 (+0.0003)
Last Week's AVG	\$1.3980	\$1.4280	\$2.5795	\$1.1605	\$0.3835
2022 AVG Same Week	\$1.8588	\$2.1513	\$2.3800	\$1.3344	\$0.4038

MARKET OPINION - CHEESE REPORTER

Cheese Comment: A total of 14 cars of blocks were sold Tuesday, the last at \$1.3900, which left the price unchanged. Seven cars of blocks were sold Wednesday, the last at \$1.4150, which set the price. On Thursday, 6 cars of blocks were sold, the last at \$1.4300, which set the price. Eight cars of blocks were sold Friday, the last at \$1.4700, which set the price. The barrel price increased Tuesday on a sale at \$1.4250, rose Wednesday on a sale at \$1.4700, declined Thursday on a sale at \$1.4300, and fell Friday on a sale at \$1.4000. December's CME Block price average was \$1.5111, while the CME barrel average price in December was \$1.4815. The yearly CME Barrel price was \$1.6205, down from \$2.0525 in 2022. The yearly CME Block price was \$1.7395 down from 2022's yearly block price of \$2.0737.

Butter Comment: The price rose Tuesday on an unfilled bid at \$2.5425, jumped Wednesday on an unfilled bid at \$2.6225, increased Thursday on a sale at \$2.6600, and rose Friday on a sale at \$2.6650. The yearly average for CME Butter was \$2.5938 in 2023, down from \$2.8596 in 2022.

Nonfat Dry Milk Comment: The price increased Wednesday on an unfilled bid at \$1.1650, and rose Friday on a sale at \$1.1700. The yearly NDM price in 2023 was \$1.1668.

Dry Whey Comment: The price rose Wednesday on a sale at 38.50 cents.

WHEY MARKETS - DECEMBER 25 - 29, 2023

RELEASE DATE - DECEMBER 28, 2023

Animal Feed Whey—Central: Milk Replacer:	.2600 (NC) – .3300 (NC)
Buttermilk Powder:	
Central & East:	1.0800 (NC) – 1.1500 (+3) West: 1.0900 (+1) – 1.2700 (NC)
Mostly:	1.1600 (NC) – 1.2200 (NC)
Casein: Rennet:	3.4000 (NC) – 3.8000 (NC) Acid: 3.5000 (NC) – 3.9000 (NC)
Dry Whey—Central (Edible):	
Nonhygroscopic:	.3700 (NC) – .4200 (NC) Mostly: .3800 (NC) – .4150 (NC)
Dry Whey—West (Edible):	
Nonhygroscopic:	.4000 (NC) – .4900 (NC) Mostly: .4100 (NC) – .4600 (NC)
Dry Whey—NE:	.3725 (-¼) – .4450 (-¼)
Lactose—Central and West:	
Edible:	.1425 (-1) – .3900 (NC) Mostly: .2200 (-1) – .3000 (-2)
Nonfat Dry Milk—Central & East:	
Low/Medium Heat:	1.1500 (NC) – 1.2300 (NC) Mostly: 1.1800 (NC) – 1.2200 (NC)
High Heat:	1.2900 (NC) – 1.3300 (NC)
Nonfat Dry Milk—Western:	
Low/Med Heat:	1.1250 (NC) – 1.2500 (NC) Mostly: 1.1600 (NC) – 1.2100 (NC)
High Heat:	1.2700 (NC) – 1.4400 (NC)
Whey Protein Concentrate—34% Protein:	
Central & West:	.8800 (NC) – 1.1250 (+½) Mostly: .9100 (NC) – 1.0000 (+1)
Whole Milk:	1.8500 (NC) – 2.2000 (NC)

HISTORICAL CME AVG BLOCK CHEESE PRICES

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
'09	1.0883	1.2171	1.2455	1.2045	1.1394	1.1353	1.1516	1.3471	1.3294	1.4709	1.5788	1.6503
'10	1.4536	1.4526	1.2976	1.4182	1.4420	1.3961	1.5549	1.6367	1.7374	1.7246	1.4619	1.3807
'11	1.5140	1.9064	1.8125	1.6036	1.6858	2.0995	2.1150	1.9725	1.7561	1.7231	1.8716	1.6170
'12	1.5546	1.4793	1.5193	1.5039	1.5234	1.6313	1.6855	1.8262	1.9245	2.0757	1.9073	1.6619
'13	1.6965	1.6420	1.6240	1.8225	1.8052	1.7140	1.7074	1.7492	1.7956	1.8236	1.8478	1.9431
'14	2.2227	2.1945	2.3554	2.2439	2.0155	2.0237	1.9870	2.1820	2.3499	2.1932	1.9513	1.5938
'15	1.5218	1.5382	\$1.5549	1.5890	1.6308	1.7052	1.6659	1.7111	1.6605	1.6674	1.6175	1.4616
'16	1.4757	1.4744	1.4877	1.4194	1.3174	1.5005	1.6613	1.7826	1.6224	1.6035	1.8775	1.7335
'17	1.6866	1.6199	1.4342	1.4970	1.6264	1.6022	1.6586	1.6852	1.6370	1.7305	1.6590	1.4900
'18	1.4928	1.5157	1.5614	1.6062	1.6397	1.5617	1.5364	1.6341	1.6438	1.5874	1.3951	1.3764
'19	1.4087	1.5589	1.5908	1.6619	1.6799	1.7906	1.8180	1.8791	2.0395	2.0703	1.9664	1.8764
'20	1.9142	1.8343	1.7550	1.1019	1.6704	2.5620	2.6466	1.7730	2.3277	2.7103	2.0521	1.6249
'21	1.7470	1.5821	1.7362	1.7945	1.6778	1.4978	1.6370	1.7217	1.7601	1.7798	1.7408	1.8930
'22	1.9065	1.9379	2.1699	2.3399	2.3293	2.1902	2.0143	1.8104	1.9548	2.0260	2.1186	2.0860
'23	2.0024	1.8895	1.9372	1.7574	1.5719	1.4039	1.6209	1.9752	1.8549	1.7216	1.6279	1.5111

USDA Notice Announces Reconvening Of Federal Order Hearing On Jan. 16

Washington—USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) today published a notice announcing the reconvening of the national federal milk marketing order hearing that began on Aug. 23, 2023.

The hearing will reconvene at 8:00 a.m. Eastern time on Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024, at the 502 East Event Centre, 502 East Carmel Drive, Carmel, IN.

If the hearing is not completed by 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on Friday, Jan. 19, it will reconvene at 8:00 a.m. Eastern time on Monday, Jan. 29, also at the 502 East Event Centre in Carmel, IN. The hearing will be held from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Eastern time each weekday.

If not completed, the hearing will recess at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on Friday, Feb. 2, and reconvene at a later date.

Dairy farmer virtual testimony will not be available when the hearing reconvenes, the USDA said.

Dairy farmers may continue to testify in person at any time during the reconvened hearing.

Dairy farmers testifying in person are not required to pre-submit testimony or exhibits.

After getting underway on Aug. 23, the hearing ran until Oct.

11, then recessed until Nov. 27. It then continued for two weeks until recessing again on Friday, Dec. 8.

Testimony since the hearing reconvened in late November has focused on the last of the five hearing categories, Class I and Class II differentials, the US Department of Agriculture said.

Hearing testimony over the two weeks of the reconvened hearing focused specifically on Proposal 19, submitted by the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), which seeks to update Class I differentials at all locations in the contiguous 48 United States, in varying amounts; and Proposal 21, submitted by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), which seeks to update the Class II differential to \$1.56 per hundred-weight.

Testimony when the hearing reconvenes on Jan. 16 is expected to focus on Proposal 20, submitted by the Milk Innovation Group (MIG), which seeks to lower the current base Class I differential from \$1.60 to \$0.00 per hundred-weight.

For more information about the hearing, visit www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/moa/dairy/hearings/national-fmmo-pricing-hearing.

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