

Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

2018 Director Elections

Winning Candidate Biographies



The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection announced the following winners of the 2018 Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin director elections held May 2 - 25 in 8 of the state's 25 districts.

Click a name below to view the biography of each district's winner or scroll down to see all:

District 2 (Florence, Forest, Langlade, Marinette, Oconto, Vilas)

[Connie Seefeldt, Coleman](#)

District 5 (Dunn, St. Croix)

[Kay Zwald, Hammond](#)

District 8 (Marathon)

[Steve Sternweis, Marshfield](#)

District 11 (Outagamie, Winnebago)

[Mike Verhasselt, Kaukauna](#)

District 14 (Jackson, La Crosse, Trempealeau)

[Patricia J. Kling, Taylor](#)

District 17 (Calumet, Manitowoc)

[Julie Maurer, Newton](#)

District 20 (Richland, Sauk)

[Sharon Laubscher, Wonewoc](#)

District 23 (Iowa, Lafayette)

[Jay Stauffacher, Darlington](#)





Connie M. Seefeldt
N1554 Behnke School Road
Coleman, WI 54112
Residence: Marinette County

Director Biography

**District 2 (Florence, Forest, Langlade,
Marinette, Oconto, Vilas)**

Spouse/Children	Spouse: James R. Children: Ken (Lisa), Tim (Paula), Ellen (Joe) Liptak, Ben (Jenny)
When did you begin dairy farming?	1972
How many cows do you milk?	120
Breed(s)	Crossbreeds
Where do you ship your milk?	Michigan Milk
Served on Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board since:	1994
Ag-related organizations or affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin▪ Dairy Management Inc.▪ National Dairy Board, Vice Chair▪ Farm Bureau▪ Michigan Milk Producers Co-op▪ Marinette County Breakfast on the Farm
Why do you want to serve on the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board?	Always, always believed in promotion, its part of my life. Since our children were little, I would tell people about our farm and dairy. Today, more than ever we need to "tell our story" and ask questions about how our checkoff is and should be spent.
Have you (or your farm) received special recognition or won any relevant awards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) Achievement Award for Milk Quality (12+years)▪ Michigan Milk Producers Association Milk Quality Award (8+ years)
What else should dairy producers in your area know about you?	I am passionate about dairy, and I enjoy people. My motto "faith, family, farm" I am active in my community and enjoy life!

[^Return to top](#)



Kay Zwald
 Bomaz Farms
 1603 County Road Z
 Hammond, WI 54015
 Residence: St. Croix County

Director Biography

District 5 (Dunn, St. Croix)

Spouse/Children	Spouse: Robert Children: Nate, Sarah, Amy, Annette, Tom
When did you begin dairy farming?	1975
How many cows do you milk?	750
Breed(s)	Holsteins
Where do you ship your milk?	A.M.P.I.
How many acres do you farm?	2,000
Served on Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board since:	2006
Ag-related organizations or affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UW Discovery Farms- currently Vice President ▪ Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin Board of Directors 2010-2016 ▪ St. Croix County Dairy Promotion
Why do you want to serve on the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board?	<p>I am passionate about promoting dairy products of all kinds. Wisconsin has the infrastructure and production capacity to be the go to place. We need to market our milk as the premium product it is.</p> <p>Education is very important. Going to school, having them come and visit the farm and educating the consumer is very important.</p>
Have you (or your farm) received special recognition or won any relevant awards?	
What else should dairy producers in your area know about you?	I am actively involved on our dairy as the calf manager for our 750 cow dairy. I have leadership experience from our county dairy promotion group, school board and other community leadership roles. I am willing to listen and I am not afraid of change as the industry demands.

[^Return to top](#)



Steven Sternweis
 Mara-Wood Farms Inc.
 S1008 Lincoln-Spencer Road
 Marshfield, WI 54449
 Residence: Marathon County

Director Biography

District 8 (Marathon)

Spouse/Children	Spouse: Dolores Children: Brian (Amy), Adam (Amy), Clint (Jena), Jackie
When did you begin dairy farming?	1972
How many cows do you milk?	540
Breed(s)	Holsteins
Where do you ship your milk?	Nasonville Dairy
How many acres do you farm?	1,250
Served on Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board since:	2006
Ag-related organizations or affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision Partners Co-op board since 1996 ▪ Edge board member for three years ▪ Member of Dairy Business Association ▪ Member of Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin ▪ Spencer FFA Alumni ▪
Why do you want to serve on the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board?	I like to be able to represent the area farmers. We need representation and serving is well worth the time. I learn a lot on this board and enjoy being a voice for the farmers in my area.
Have you (or your farm) received special recognition or won any relevant awards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Farm has been featured in articles. Most recently in Dairy Star.
What else should dairy producers in your area know about you?	<p>I feel serving on boards and being active in those companies that impact your business is key. Staying informed of business decisions throughout the chain can really impact your farm.</p> <p>I also can't emphasize enough the importance of family. There's no better feeling than carrying on the traditions of the generations that were before you and the responsibilities of carrying those traditions forward for my children and grandchildren.</p>

[^Return to top](#)



Mike Verhasselt
Verhasselt Farms
N3920 Section Line Rd.
Kaukauna, WI 54130
Residence: Outagamie

Director Biography

District 11 (Outagamie, Winnebago)

Spouse/Children	Spouse: Marney Children: Matt, Jon, Lauren
When did you begin dairy farming?	1988
How many cows do you milk?	
Breed(s)	
Where do you ship your milk?	Saputo
How many acres do you farm?	
Served on Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board since:	
Ag-related organizations or affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Professional Dairy Producers of WisconsinForage Council
Why do you want to serve on the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board?	I would like to become more involved in promoting the product that I have been producing my entire life in a responsible manner.
Have you (or your farm) received special recognition or won any relevant awards?	
What else should dairy producers in your area know about you?	I help to operate a family farm with 3 active generations.

[^Return to top](#)



Patricia Kling
 Kling Acres
 W15307 Wilson Road
 Taylor, WI 54659
 Residence: Jackson County

Director Biography

District 14 (Jackson, La Crosse, Trempealeau)

Spouse/Children	Spouse: Steve Children: Nathan, Sarah, Samuel, Joel
When did you begin dairy farming?	1976 (with in-laws); 1981 (alone)
How many cows do you milk?	50
Breed(s)	Holstein and some Jersey and Fleckvieh
Where do you ship your milk?	Dairy Farmers of America
How many acres do you farm?	400 acres
Served on Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board since:	2006
Ag-related organizations or affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jackson County Farm Bureau ▪ A.A.W.- North Woods Chapter ▪ Equity Co-op, Coulee Graziers ▪ Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin ▪ Jackson Co. Dairy Promotion Committee ▪ Jackson County Extension Advisory Committee ▪ Country Crystals 4-H ▪ Dairy Breakfast hosts- 1995 & 2013
Why do you want to serve on the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board?	To represent District 14 dairy farmers, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin works to promote in state and out of state, creating demand, which drives sales of delicious dairy. I feel I want to be part of this challenging road ahead.
Have you (or your farm) received special recognition or won any relevant awards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2000 – Farm Bureau Women of the Year ▪ 2002 – Taylor County FFA Alumni Agriculturalist Award ▪ 2005 - Watershed Conservation Award ▪ 2012 – Midwest Farm Family of the Year Award ▪ 2016 – Jackson County Fair Outstanding Farm Family of the year
What else should dairy producers in your area know about you?	I believe farmers should be as competitive as any other industry. We need a good wage for all the work that goes into our product.

[^Return to top](#)



Julie Maurer
Soaring Eagle Dairy
9007 State Road 42,
Newton, WI 53063
Residence: Manitowoc County

Director Biography

District 17 (Calumet, Manitowoc)

Spouse/Children	Spouse: Rick Children: Hailey, Kelsey
When did you begin dairy farming?	2003
How many cows do you milk?	1,150
Breed(s)	Holsteins
Where do you ship your milk?	Land O Lakes
How many acres do you farm?	1,930
Served on Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board since:	
Ag-related organizations or affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wisconsin Agriculture Education Center- Board President▪ Land O Lakes Master Focus Group Member
Why do you want to serve on the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board?	The work of Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin has a huge impact on Wisconsin's dairy industry. I look forward to helping to make decisions on behalf of Manitowoc and Calumet counties to positively impact our farms.
Have you (or your farm) received special recognition or won any relevant awards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dairy Business Association 2015 Advocate of the Year
What else should dairy producers in your area know about you?	I'm passionate about our industry and would be proud to represent my fellow dairymen and women on the board of Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.

[^Return to top](#)



Sharon Laubscher
 Laubscher Farms
 E2064 Hwy. 33
 Wonevot, WI 53968
 Residence: Sauk County

Director Biography

District 20 (Richland, Sauk)

Spouse/Children	Spouse: David Children: Dawn Tuschen, Ann Dorn and Dennis Laubscher
When did you begin dairy farming?	1990 (we had beef 1976-1990)
How many cows do you milk?	About 45
Breed(s)	Holstein, Milking Shorthorns and Jerseys
Where do you ship your milk?	Carr Valley Cheese
How many acres do you farm?	300
Served on Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board since:	2007
Ag-related organizations or affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Served on Dairy Farmer of Wisconsin since 2007 ▪ Belong to Farmfirst cooperative ▪ Select Sire cooperative ▪ Sauk promotions group ▪ FSA committee ▪ Sauk Planning And Zoning ▪ past members of Plum Valley Soil Conservation ▪ Plum Valley 4-H ▪ Served on National Dairy Board for two terms
Why do you want to serve on the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board?	I want to make sure that people know that our dairy products are good and healthy for everyone, so many have a misconception about Dairy and I want to show them that we do care for our animals, the land and the environment. We have a lot of great products and if we don't promote them how will anyone find out about them. We are Wisconsin, the Dairy state.
Have you (or your farm) received special recognition or won any relevant awards?	Century Farm Award, Milk Quality
What else should dairy producers in your area know about you?	

[^Return to top](#)



Jay Stauffacher
 Highway Dairy Farms
 16323 Meylor Lane
 Darlington, WI 53530
 Residence: Lafayette County

Director Biography

District 23 (Iowa, Lafayette)

Spouse/Children	Children: Aaron, Eric
When did you begin dairy farming?	1989
How many cows do you milk?	800
Breed(s)	Holsteins
Where do you ship your milk?	Grande Cheese
How many acres do you farm?	2,500
Served on Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board since:	2000
Ag-related organizations or affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lafayette County Dairy Promotion- President ▪ Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin- past chairman, current treasure ▪ Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance ▪ Day at the Dairy Committee ▪ Accelerated Genetics delegate ▪ Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin
Why do you want to serve on the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board?	<p>I have always believed in the importance of promoting Wisconsin's dairy products, and that is why I am running for the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. I was first elected in 2000 to represent District 23 and I am proud to have been a part of many positive results at Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. Every year we look at different ways to accomplish our mission statement in the most fiscally responsible and efficient manner possible in order to get the best return out of our checkoff dollars. One of our results was renaming ourselves the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin to better reflect who we truly are and we are putting more focus on digital advertising and social media sites to adapt to today's consumer. We have all heard stories of people not being able to find Wisconsin Cheese when they go out of state, sometimes it is a distribution issue, but many times Wisconsin cheese is there it is just not labeled very well or is private label and the Wisconsin information is not very noticeable. As a result of this we as a Board asked our staff to create a new label that is very Wisconsin identifiable, once that is accomplished we have to get buy in from cheese companies to use it. 90% of Wisconsin cheese is consumed out of state and with flat consumer demand in the US we are exploring more export opportunities for Wisconsin dairy products. It's no secret that the dairy community is going through some challenging times and together we need to do everything that we can and our efforts with the checkoff dollars will impact demand with dairy products going forward. I ask my fellow producers to continue to support me to represent our district so I can continue to work with promotion of our dairy products that will eventually translate into a better economic future for Wisconsin dairy farmers.</p>
Have you (or your farm) received special recognition or won any relevant awards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality Milk Awards- Grande
What else should dairy producers in your area know about you?	I run the dairy farm that I grew up on and believe in working to further the dairy industry as a whole and the community in which I live.

[^Return to top](#)