

## A Message from Your PDPW President

Dear PDPW Member and fellow dairy farmer,

My name is Mitch Breunig, a dairy producer from Sauk City, Wis., and it is my privilege to serve you as president of the Professional Dairy Producers Board of Directors. Our board members are elected to three-year terms by you, the farm members of PDPW. I am honored to be selected, and I am excited to serve alongside other fellow dairy producers who will set the direction for PDPW in the coming year.

Ever since I joined the board, it has been my goal to listen to members, especially those who for whatever reason have not been very vocal. Maybe you can't get to many industry meetings. Maybe you feel like your opinion doesn't matter that much. I hear you. It's tough to be everywhere and sometimes you wonder if it matters.

**Your voice matters to PDPW.** We can only deliver the most cutting edge, relevant programming if we know what matters to you. PDPW's mission is *to share ideas, solutions, resources and experiences that help dairy producers succeed*. Our challenge is to provide the programming and educational resources that serves the breadth of our members – from the 20-something young adult coming home to the farm, to the 60-plus generation who has rich experience and wisdom to contribute, and everyone in between. Our programming is at its best when you contribute your ideas. If there are information or resources you need to be successful, we want to hear from you.

**We need to keep getting better.** We heard from multiple speakers at the 2015 PDPW Business Conference that the dairy landscape is becoming more competitive as European dairy producers ramp up their production capabilities. Other regions of the world are already low cost producers. Since the U.S. dairy industry has a significant share of the world market, we need to remain competitive. That means staying cutting edge in everything we do.

There may be competition looming, and at the same time we are more likely to benefit from sharing information than from adopting a competitive mindset. Milk is our brand. It's what holds us all together and compels us to communicate with one voice. It doesn't matter where or what type of farm we have – what matters is that consumers trust us to deliver a quality, healthy, and safe milk and meat dairy product.

So, no matter what size or style of dairy you run, keep getting better. Our consumers expect it.

**In addition to programming, PDPW works “behind the scenes” to make sure dairy producers are at the table wherever dairy's voice needs to be heard.** It's impossible for us dairy producers to be at every meeting, so the PDPW board and staff keep their fingers on the pulse of the industry and make sure we are represented at the table.

- From time to time during the year, you'll receive a letter like this one from me, updating you on the issues PDPW is working on. Be sure to stay plugged in on these issues. It is *our responsibility* to stay ahead of the curve, so that what we do and how we do it is not defined or dictated by others, and so we can keep improving.

That brings me to my final point, a goal that I hope to see realized during my time on the PDPW board. I **believe every farm should have a capable spokesperson – someone who understands dairy’s story and is not afraid to tell it in the media and in the community.** You never know when a situation is going to arise, positive or negative, when a spokesperson is called upon to speak. (You may have seen my family’s farm in media earlier this year regarding our cow family. Being ready for this call gave us and the dairy industry a tremendous opportunity to tell our story.)

- Public communication is not comfortable for everyone, and yet it is very much needed as we interact more and more with consumers and others in the food system. **We are doing so many wonderful things on our farms! We need to tell these stories.** So find someone on your farm who is willing, and send them to one of PDPW’s conferences, workshops and other trainings throughout the year. This is a key way our dairy farms can be proactive and prepared for the challenges ahead.

**Let’s stay in touch.** If you ever have any questions or comments about what you hear, please contact me or the PDPW staff. We would love to hear from you. You can also keep an eye on the PDPW web site at [www.pdpw.org](http://www.pdpw.org), or follow PDPW on Facebook or Twitter.

If you have any questions or comments about this letter or any dairy-related concerns, feel free to contact me. You are the key to keeping PDPW grassroots, producer-led, and effective. I look forward to hearing from you, or seeing you at a PDPW event in the coming year!

Sincerely,



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**PDPW Mission:** *To share ideas, resources, solutions and experiences that help dairy producers succeed.*

**PDPW Vision:** *To lead the success of the dairy industry through education.*