

Dairy's Important Role in Beef Production



By *Kylie Blanchard for the N.D. Beef Commission*

The mission of the N.D. Beef Commission (NDBC) is to enhance beef demand by strengthening consumer trust and exceeding consumer expectations. There are five strategic priorities that support this mission, and one is growing consumer trust in beef and beef production, which includes dairy cattle.



Lilah Krebs,
NDBC board
member

Lilah Krebs and her husband, Alan, own and operate a dairy, beef and grain farm north of Gladstone.

Krebs also grew up on a dairy, beef and crop farm and thought she was done farming following high school. “When I went to college to be a nurse, I swore I would never own a black-and-white cow,” she says. “I worked in town for 20 years as a nurse, but it seemed right to go into dairy so I could be home with my kids.”

Thirty years ago, she and her husband began their dairy operation. “We started our farmstead from scratch, with the barn built before the house,” she says. Today, the Krebs have six children. Three are involved in the farming operation. They have 100 dairy cattle, milking 80, and have 50 head of beef cattle with their son’s 300 head of beef cattle.

Krebs serves on several dairy boards and has been on the NDBC for two years. “Being a retired nurse, I have always been interested in research projects that influence the health and well-being of people,” she says. “By serving on the NDBC, I have a vote on which projects to help fund. Also being a dairy/beef producer, I appreciate the continued focus on promoting our high-quality, nutritious beef.”

She says the connection between dairy and beef farming is important to the success of the industries. “Although dairy producers produce milk, we also produce beef. About 20 percent of the beef produced comes from dairy animals,” Krebs notes. “Therefore, our checkoff dollars add value to our dairy herd the same as for the beef herds.”

The checkoff dollars also help grow the demand for beef locally and in the foreign markets, she adds. “They provide for the funding of research for new beef products, as well as projects related to beef nutrition. They also promote a positive image of beef.”

The dairy checkoff program differs from the beef checkoff, Krebs notes, with producers paying a 15-cent-per-hundred weight assessment on milk. Of the 15 cents, five cents supports national programs and 10 cents remains local.

Krebs says the dairy industry has struggled in recent years. “Unfortunately, the North Dakota dairy industry has gotten considerably smaller in the past several years,” she notes. “I feel all sectors of agriculture have suffered recently, but dairy has been hit hard the past four years, forcing many out of business.”

But she continues to support the dairy and beef industries both through her involvement on the NDBC and her work as a dairy and beef farmer. “There is nothing better than sitting down to a meal with beef on my plate and a cold glass of nutritious, delicious milk in my glass,” she says.

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