President's Report

Springing into an Exciting and Eventful Year

A spring welcome to our dairy farmers in Iowa! 2023 has been a busy and eventful year so far. I hope our newsletter finds you in good spirits and thankful for all the blessings and goodness we have for being dairy farm families in this state and in our world. Spring is a busy time, but always a time to look forward to new growth and opportunities for the year. I hope for the best in all our challenges this coming year.

Our legislative efforts have had many twists and turns this year with the raw milk bill being passed by Governor Reynolds and the Dairy Innovation bill being signed as we speak. A big thank you to our staff, especially our director, Mariah Busta, for all the work that was put into these two bills. Also, many thanks to Jill Altringer, our lobbyist, for her work for us during session. A great amount of time and effort, including both offensive and defensive strategies, went into the outcomes on both bills.

The efforts from our board members were much appreciated as they spent time contacting legislators. The policy committee played an integral role in the legislative action we took. Special thanks to all who made it down to Dairy Day at the Capitol this year. It was a time well spent and our words and thoughts were very much appreciated by the legislators we met with that day. Our presence impacted us as an Iowa dairy industry and the outcome of the Dairy Innovation bill being

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passed was the fruit of our labor. As dairy farmers, we can be thankful for all the dairy farm membership and support from the industry partners to keep ISDA moving forward. Together, we make the dairy in our state vibrant and viable for many years to come. We all have a role in letting everyone know how vital dairy is to our economy in our state and the greatness of foods we produce for our families, our consumers, and our world.

I know that at this moment our milk price is not the greatest and there are some supply management issues to work on, but we have great resources to be proud of in our state. Our task at ISDA is to move forward with who we are and what we do for our dairy farmers for the future for our farms, our families, our country, and our world. We have one of the greatest foods to provide for them.

Milk: It does the body good!

Your President,

Lee Maassen
With the conclusion of the Iowa General Assembly at the beginning of May, ISDA has several highlights from the 2023 legislative session to reflect on. ISDA hosted Dairy Day at the Capitol in March where board members and staff visited the Capitol to meet with legislators. Topics of discussion revolved around the state of Iowa’s dairy industry, the Dairy Innovation bill and opportunities to bring additional dairy processing to Iowa. The visit also included a discussion with Kayla Lyon, director for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Once again, ISDA worked hard to pass and fund the Dairy Innovation Fund and Program. Last year, the bill passed, however, failed to receive the funding for the program. This year, we had great success. Iowa’s legislature passed the fund and program which will provide $750,000 to dairy farmers to implement on-farm processing and labor reducing technologies. This program, administered by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, will provide a one-to-one match of up to $100,000 for qualifying projects on farms with 50 or less employees. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

ISDA supported funding for phase two of the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL) at Iowa State University. After negotiation, the House and Senate agreed to $18 million in funding over a two-year period. These funds will come from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund, known as RIIF, which is primarily funded by Iowa gaming revenues. This funding comes in addition to the $40 million directed from ARPA funds by the Governor. We appreciate our legislators’ support and understanding of the importance of having a renowned diagnostic lab to support livestock in Iowa.

Raw milk was a hot topic this session. ISDA continued to lobby against the bill to allow the sale of raw milk direct to consumers. ISDA opposed the bill because of the health and safety risks associated with unregulated unpasteurized milk. Prior to session, the ISDA policy committee members met with Senator Jason Schultz asking him to include more robust safety measures in the raw milk bill. Some precautions were added, however, ISDA did not feel they were adequate. Ultimately, in this legislation, producers selling raw milk will not have to abide by the same quality and safety control measures as licensed and inspected dairy farms. ISDA sent a letter to the Governor asking her to veto the bill. However, Governor Reynolds signed the bill, which will go into effect July 1, 2023.

In addition to our involvement in state government, ISDA is also active at the federal level. This fall, ISDA board members will travel to Washington D.C. to meet with legislators and discuss national issues that affect dairy farmers, including the Farm Bill. ISDA continues to make our voice heard in other national issues including labor, milk labeling and school milk.

As always, ISDA encourages you as dairy farmers to talk to local legislators and help them understand the dairy industry and the issues you face on your farm. These conversations provide a foundation that we can build on in future legislative sessions. On behalf of ISDA, thank you for your membership and support. Have a happy June Dairy Month!

Mariah Busta, Executive Director
Iowa State Dairy Association
Celebrate June Dairy Month at Hickory Hill Farms
Western Iowa Dairy Alliance Invites Public to Free, Family-Friendly Event

Dairy farmers across western Iowa are inviting the public to a family-friendly event at Hickory Hill Farms near Hospers, Iowa, to celebrate June Dairy Month. The event will include a dairy farm tour, free meal and activities from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, June 14. The farm is located at 4045 400th St, Hospers, Iowa. The June Dairy Month Celebration is sponsored by Western Iowa Dairy Alliance.

Visitors will tour Hickory Hills Farms, including opportunities to see where cows are milked, where they are housed and fed, and learn about the role of milk and dairy products in a healthy diet. Veterinarians, dairy nutritionists, dairy farmers and other experts will be available to answer questions.

“We are excited to invite everyone to celebrate June Dairy Month with us by touring the Dairy Farm and seeing where the dairy products they enjoy get their start,” stated Steve Meissner of Hickory Hill Farms. “Great-tasting dairy products start with healthy, comfortable cows, and we look forward to sharing how we care for animals and the land.”

The Meissner’s started milking in the 1890s with Great-Great Grandpa William Meissner in Sussex, WI. Today Steve and Scott Meissner are currently milking 4000 cows two times a day in a double 32 parlor.

Cows are housed in a freestall barn with fiber bedding and 24 hour access to feed and water, and the dairy is committed to using the latest technology, resources and talent of employees in producing high quality milk while protecting the environment and providing a positive way of life for its employees.

Following the tour, guests will enjoy a free cheeseburger meal, as well as milk and ice cream. We are honored to have Iowa Dairy Princess, along with Dairy Ambassador’s attending the event, and attendees will have the chance to meet dairy calves. In addition, there will be kid’s activities, educational displays, machinery display and much more!

June Dairy Month is a great opportunity to celebrate the efforts of Iowa’s dairy farmers as they deliver a wholesome and nutritious supply of milk and dairy products and make a significant contribution to the state’s economy and rural communities.

Dairy is the fifth largest agricultural business in Iowa, generating $5.6 billion a year in economic activity from farming to dairy processing, supplying 22,000 jobs with a labor income of $891 million. The annual economic impact of a single dairy cow is more than $25,000 per cow.

For more information about the open house, visit www.wiadairy.com or “Western Iowa Dairy Alliance” on Facebook. Please visit MidwestDairy.com for more stories from the farm, dairy nutrition information and dairy recipes.

Western Iowa Dairy Alliance is a non-profit organization working as an advocate for the dairy producer and all those who support this industry with commitment and integrity, allowing us to bring the very best, most nourishing products to market, every day. For more information, visit www.wiadairy.com.
The Iowa Dairy Princess Advisory Council has opened the eligibility requirements for the Iowa Dairy Princess Contest!

NEW in 2022, the eligibility requirements were opened for the Iowa Dairy Princess Contest. All candidates must have an active interest in Iowa’s dairy cattle industry, and there are 3 ways a candidate may be eligible:

1. First, the candidate represents their county promotion board or state breed association as either the princess OR the first alternate princess.
2. Second, the candidate represented their county or state group last year and are still eligible to represent the same group again in this year’s contest. For example, your specific county may have 2 representing candidates, the candidate from the previous year and also from the current year.
3. Thirdly, differentiating from previous years, this 3rd item is also NEW from 2022 – where a candidate may reside in a county that does not have an active dairy promotion board, but still meets all the eligibility requirements and would like to enter to represent the county she lives in!

We want to find the best dairy advocate to serve the dairy industry in Iowa each year, and the Iowa Dairy Princess Advisory Council has made these determinations to encourage any 17- to 24-year-old female to apply for the position each year by opening the eligibility requirements.

SAVE THE DATE
2023 Dairy Youth Communications Workshop & Dairy Princess Orientation Tuesday, June 6, 2023

To learn more, visit MidwestDairy.com.
Eighty-nine farmer leaders from across the 10-state Midwest region attended Midwest Dairy’s 2023 Annual meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, in early April. In addition to the division and corporate board meetings hosted during this event, Midwest Dairy staff were also able to highlight checkoff work in three hands-on breakout sessions.

These breakout sessions were designed to allow dairy farmers to learn more about and experience the work done with their checkoff investment. They had the opportunity to ask questions and see firsthand how the expertise of Midwest Dairy staff is used to reach consumers working with and through partners.

One breakout session allowed farmers to experience a “day in the life of a college student” by showcasing checkoff trust work with adult Gen Z on college campuses. This round-robin style breakout allowed farmers to rotate around the room to different stations. One station showcased our partnership with Version1 where farmers got to try their hand at playing the popular video game Rocket League and ask questions about the esports video gaming platform. Another station highlighted the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) training table, showcasing checkoff’s work with Husker Performance Nutrition staff. Midwest Dairy staff also encouraged farmers to enjoy a Greek yogurt snack served on campus. The final two stations included a classroom sustainability experience where farmers learned more about the Gen Z demographic’s opinions and a Winterfest De-Stress activity. Farmers were encouraged to “de-stress” with a Santa photo op and peppermint hot chocolate milk that was also served at the Winterfest event in 2022 at Iowa State University.

Another breakout session got farmers in the competitive spirit by playing a Family Feud style game to learn more about building demand for dairy with retail and food service partners. Farmers enjoyed playing Dairy Famer Feud, revealing specific retail and food service activations in 2022. Farmers walked away with a deeper understanding of checkoff demand work by showcasing sales activations and by seeing how and why we work with partners. In addition, innovative dairy products were available for tasting, allowing farmers to experience a variety of menu options.

During the 2023 Midwest Dairy Annual Meeting, farmers got to learn, experience, and taste how their checkoff dollars are reaching consumers in the marketplace today to build demand and trust in dairy. Midwest Dairy is proud to be a farmer lead organization and encourages all dairy farmers to connect with board members from their own states and communities to learn more about their experience with checkoff initiatives during the 2023 Annual Meeting.
The Coalition to Support Iowa’s Farmers (CSIF) has been busy throughout the first few months of 2023 providing assistance to livestock and poultry farmers across the state siting new facilities, interpreting rules and regulations, enhancing relationships with neighbors, and implementing best management practices, including planting trees.

**Growing the Livestock Industry**

This year has been one of cautious growth in the livestock and poultry sectors. During the 2022 fiscal year, CSIF provided on-farm consultations to 80 farm families. In addition, the Coalition received more than 150 new requests for assistance and facilitated over 550 requests for continued support from farm families. At this point in the 2023 fiscal year, CSIF has provided over 50 on-farm consultations and has received more than 100 new requests for assistance as well as 330 continued support requests. Since the Coalition was formed in 2004, the organization has now assisted nearly 5,200 livestock and poultry farmers.

Along with growth in the livestock and poultry industries, comes the potential for neighbor relations issues with the construction of new facilities. Fortunately, proper planning and effective communication with neighbors has helped mitigate these problems.

“Farmers interested in growing their livestock farm, or perhaps putting up their first building, are encouraged to take their time in the planning process. Generally, it takes 6-8 months of planning before you are able to start construction,” said CSIF Executive Director Brian Waddingham. “The more time spent selecting good sites and visiting with neighbors in advance of moving dirt, the more successful the outcome for the farm family has been.”

To schedule a free and confidential on-farm consultation, visit supportfarmers.com or call 800-932-2436.

**Improving Relations with Neighbors**

In addition to communicating with community members, there are many other things farmers can do to proactively enhance relationships. One way is by planting trees.

The Coalition offers the expertise of the Green Farmstead Partner program, an initiative designed to provide information, resources, and contacts for farmers interested in planting trees on their farms. From providing visual screening, to improving eye appeal, to reducing odor, tree plantings are great way to help keep neighbors content. Not to mention the added benefits of wind and snow protection for the facility.

To date, more than 80,000 trees have been planted on livestock and poultry farms through the program. Visit supportfarmers.com/greenfarmsteadpartner to learn more about the program.

**Celebrating Good Farm Neighbors**

CSIF is proud to celebrate good farm neighbors through the Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award. The award, presented in partnership with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and The Big Show, recognizes farm families who raise livestock responsibly, implement conservation and/or environmental stewardship practices on their land, and engage themselves in their community.

In September of 2022, the Schutte family became the 168th recipients of the award. Lance and Jonna Schutte, along with their four children, operate Jo-Lane Dairy in Clayton County. In addition to the 140 head dairy operation, the farm grows corn for grain and silage as well as alfalfa, oats, and rye. They have implemented many conservation practices including terraces, grass waterways, and cover crops.

Beyond the farm, Jonna is a 4-H leader, Sunday school teacher, Midwest Dairy Iowa Division Secretary, Iowa Dairy Princess Advisory Council member, and she serves on the Iowa Holstein State and District Youth Committees. The family also hosts an annual preschool farm tour.

Since 2003, 170 farm families have received the Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award. To learn more about the award or nominate a deserving farmer, visit supportfarmers.com.
Nearly 25% percent of a dairy’s production costs are in raising heifer replacements, thus a considerable amount of feed, time, and facilities must be invested to optimize growth for heifers to calve at an appropriate age. This project will empower dairy producers, heifer growers, and their employees with knowledge and tools needed to make positive changes in their heifer raising program.

The steps include recruiting farms to measure and benchmark heifer growth, providing bilingual resources for employees, and utilizing a hybrid approach to provide in-person and virtual offerings to our audience. Long-term outcomes include re-evaluation of heifer inventories, changes in heifer management practices, and improved heifer performance and farm profitability.

This summer, the Extension Dairy Team will recruit farms to participate in benchmarking heifer development. These farms will be visited at least twice during the project to collect heifer bodyweight and height, and mature body weight will be measured from a representative sample of healthy, mid lactation cows in their third or fourth lactation. Data from the project collection along with a questionnaire and computer or herd record analysis will be summarized and shared with the producer and their industry representatives.

If producers are interested in participating in the project, please contact: Gail Carpenter at ajcarpen@iastate.edu or Jennifer Bentley at jbentley@iastate.edu
A Dairy and Ag Outlook Seminar: Understanding a Changing Industry, will be held on Wednesday, June 14, at the Ridgeway Community Center, 690 County Street, in Ridgeway, Iowa, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. This seminar is sponsored by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, the University of Minnesota Extension, and the University of Wisconsin Extension.

The seminar is targeted toward assisting ag lenders and farm financial advisers in helping farmers manage risk and understand market outlooks. Price risk management continues to be a major variable for profitability in many commodity enterprises while land has seen record inflation. Understanding the ag markets is a necessary part of lender portfolio management.

Topics include:

- Land, Livestock and Crop Market Update. Presented by Chad Hart, Iowa State University.

The cost is $40 for agricultural lenders and service providers and $20 for dairy and ag producers and students. Ag lenders and financial advisers are encouraged to invite and support their producers to attend the seminar. Payment will be taken at the door, but pre-registration is required at https://go.iastate.edu/DAIRYAGOUTLOOK

For more information, contact Jennifer Bentley or Allie McIntyre at the ISU Extension and Outreach Winneshiek County office at 563-382-2949. They can be reached by email at jbentley@iastate.edu or alliemc@iastate.edu

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[Image of a cow]
Consumers are also increasingly interested in how their food is produced, who produces it, how animals are cared for and the impact on the environment. A recent 2020 dairy consumer survey revealed that almost half of the respondents would purchase more products from companies that make animal welfare a core part of their business philosophy, and about three-quarters would pay a premium for these products.

**What Makes a Comfy Cow?**

Cow comfort is important to milk production, milk quality, reproductive efficiency and the overall health and well-being including the physiological and emotional/behavioral needs of the cow. Fine tuning the environment and management practices can lead to increased milk production and economic benefits to dairy operations of all sizes.

**Aspects of cow comfort include:**

- Appropriately designed, soft and clean resting space that limits injury and/or disease.
- Protection from cold, wind, rain and sun.
- Effective cooling and ventilation.
- Proper lighting with illumination and color levels.
- Optimum stocking density.
- Good cow grouping according to social structure and behavior.
- Freedom of movement.
- Access to high-quality feed.
- Access to fresh, clean water on demand.

**A Comfy Cow is a Hydrated Cow**

Water is the single nutrient that can impact milk production the most drastically. Milking cows drink between 30 to 50 gallons of water per day to produce a nutrient packed product that is itself typically 87% water.

“I always tell my clients that water is the most essential nutrient because without access to good, clean, fresh water you will limit the animal’s ability to perform,” said Dr. King Hickman, DVM and founding partner of GPS Dairy Consulting in Sheldon, Iowa. “You want to make sure that you are testing the water periodically to make sure it’s not high in sulfates, nitrates, manganese or iron to ensure good water quality. Another issue I see most commonly is not providing enough water space for the size and capacity of the pens and the waterers may be undersized. A simple rule of thumb is to plan for two linear inches of water space per lactating cow. You need to have enough space around your water troughs so that the animals can get a drink while other animals can still pass through so the area doesn’t become a bottle neck.”

Dairy cattle will consume as much as 50 to 60% of their total daily water consumption immediately after milking when given a choice.

“Waterers that don’t perform well, meaning they weren’t filling quick enough can negatively impact milk production,” said Dr. Hickman. “You need enough water pressure and enough flow to meet the water demands of your cattle. Think about a water fountain that you or I might drink from that the water just barely driibbles out and you have a hard time getting enough water at one time or think about a water fountain that has too much pressure and the water just shoots out of the bowl.”

**Dairy Farmers Strive to Improve**

The McAllister Family Dairy located in New Vienna, Iowa is one example of a multi-generational farm that is constantly monitoring the comfort, well-being and productivity of their 275 cow milking herd. The herd is primarily Holsteins with an additional 45 milking Jerseys. Eight years ago, the family invested in a major upgrade to the barn and facilities to prepare for long term viability and improve overall cow comfort. The results have been impressive.

McAllister Family Dairy is consistently ranks in the top 10% of dairy production for Dubuque County, Iowa awarded by the Dubuque County Dairy Promotion Association. This year the farm was also awarded for most improved fat and protein in 2022 with an improvement of 353 lbs. Additionally, they were recognized by CentralStar Cooperative, serving more than 7,500 Midwest dairy and producers, with performance rankings of:

- Third ranked Jersey herd for energy corrected milk (ECM) and protein: 21,865 lbs. of milk; 1,169 lbs. of fat at 5.3%; 833 lbs. protein at 3.8%; ECM 28,661 lbs.
36th ranked Holstein herd for ECM (ranked 6th for comparative herd size); 32,325 lbs. of milk; 1,280 lbs. of fat at 4.0%; 1,039 lbs. of protein at 3.2%; ECM 35,095 lbs.

“When cows are laying, they are making milk,” said Megan McAllister. “Cow comfort is crucial to any dairy farm and especially when trying to be more profitable. We are always looking for ways to stay abreast of the latest technology and tools available. A year and a half ago we put in an activity monitoring system for the cows. Last summer was the first time we could monitor heat stress. We thought that our barn was optimal for cow comfort, had enough ventilation — we were doing all the best management practices. Air movement felt great in the feed alley or when standing in the cows’ pens, but the data from our cows was telling us that they were feeling heat stress during very humid, hot and stale days.”

After review, it was determined that there was not enough air flow directly aimed at the cows’ heads when laying in their stalls. New fans were installed this spring to correct this issue. Everything from water quality to bedding cleanliness is scrutinized on the farm and every detail counts when it comes to cow comfort.

“We clean our waterers every other day and we are pretty strict about it,” said McAllister. “We wouldn’t want to drink dirty water and neither do the cows. It is essential to make sure that our dairy cows have access to clean, fresh water at all times. It’s important for us to choose reliable and easy to maintain equipment. We know when we install a Ritchie waterer it is one less thing we have to worry about.”

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Anna Hinchley, Hinchley’s Dairy Farm, Cambridge, WI
Midwest Dairy announced 11 students will receive $1,000 scholarships this fall to an accredited college or university of their choice. Applications were reviewed by a committee and recipients were chosen based on their involvement in the dairy industry, leadership, career plans and academic standing. **This year’s recipients include:**

- **Grace Clark of Rudd.** Studying dairy science at Iowa State University.
- **Sydney Demmer of Dundee.** Studying agricultural business at Kirkwood Community College.
- **Ian Dunleavy of Denver, IA.** Studying political science and international relations at the University of Iowa.
- **Ashley Elsbernd of Calmar.** Studying dairy science with a minor in agribusiness at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.
- **Amber Engelken of Earlville.** Studying dairy science with minors in agronomy and environmental studies at Iowa State University.

Two additional scholarships will be awarded to the Iowa Dairy Princess and alternate upon completion of their duties following the Iowa State Fair. These recipients are **Naomi Scott of Westgate** and **Emily Manweiler of Sumner.**

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Iowa State Dairy Association announced 14 students will receive $500 scholarships this fall to an accredited college or university of their choice. Applications were reviewed by a committee and recipients were chosen based on their involvement in the dairy industry, leadership, career plans and academic standing. **This year’s recipients include:**

- **Aidan Bower of Danbury.** Studying biological systems engineering at Iowa State University.
- **Corin Bower of Danbury.** Studying elementary education at Morningside College.
- **Grace Clark of Rudd.** Studying animal and dairy science at Iowa State University.
- **Anna Dietzenbach of Fort Atkinson.** Studying agriculture business at Hawkeye Community College.
- **Ian Dunleavy of Denver.** Studying political science and international relations at the University of Iowa.
- **Amber Engelken of Earlville.** Studying dairy science with minors in agronomy and environmental studies at Iowa State University.
- **Kiersten Gibbs of Waterville.** Studying animal science with a minor in nutrition at Iowa State University.
- **Jake Hoefler of New Vienna.** Studying diesel technology at Hawkeye Community College.
- **Lauren Kishman of Monona.** Studying animal science at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.
- **Nathan Knapp of Larchwood.** Studying diesel mechanics at Southeast Technical Institute.
- **Thomas Lehmann of Durango.** Studying for a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University.
- **Troy Schmitt of Fort Atkinson.** Studying accounting at the University of Northern Iowa.
- **Tara Knapp of Larchwood.** Studying diagnostic medical sonography at Southeast Technical Institute.
- **Allison Schelling of Orange City.** Studying equine science and management at Ellsworth Community College.
- **Jacqlyn Schmitt of Fort Atkinson.** Studying political science at Iowa State University.
- **Anna ten Hoeve of Waverly.** Studying interior design at Iowa State University.

The ISDA scholarship fund is made possible through ISDA memberships and sponsorship from the Central Plains Dairy Foundation.
The Ralph Keeling Leadership Award is presented annually to an Iowan who has shown outstanding leadership in Iowa’s dairy industry. This award is in honor of the late Ralph Keeling. Keeling operated a successful dairy farm and business, devoting much of his time and talents to progressing Iowa’s dairy industry. Established in 1967, the award recognizes those individuals whose leadership efforts contribute significantly to Iowa’s dairy industry. The 2022 recipients of The Ralph Keeling Leadership Award were Dave Brown and Joe Simon.

If you know a dairy farmer or industry representative deserving of the award, submit the nomination form to the ISDA team by visiting www.iowadairy.org/scholarships-and-awards. Questions? Please reach out to Executive Director Mariah Busta at mariahbusta@iowadairy.org.
Celebrate

June Dairy Month
with Farm Tour, Food and Fun!

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You can also visit the ISDA website at www.iowadairy.org to fill out an online membership form. Please make Associate Membership checks payable to the Iowa State Dairy Association. For 2023, the ISDA Producer Membership fee will be waived in recognition of the financial restraints in the agricultural industry in Iowa. In 2023, we will review reinstating membership fees for the 2024 calendar year.

While membership dues to the Iowa State Dairy Association are not tax deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes, a portion may be tax deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses. However, the portion of membership dues that represent nondeductible lobbying activities of Iowa State Dairy Association is not tax deductible. The nondeductible portion of your dues is 30%. Please return dues and membership form to: ISDA Accounting Office, 2015 Rice Street, St. Paul, MN 55113.