



July 2025 UDC + DPU Joint Meeting Minutes

07/15/2025 12:00 PM MDT to 4:00 PM MDT

Marriott Salt Lake City Center | Amethyst Ballroom | 220 South State Street | Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Attendees:

Utah Dairy Commissioners present:

Kaleb Bateman, Daniel Buttars, Chace Fullmer, David Roberts, Sheila Sherwood, Trevor Wayment, Landon Wiser, Mitch Hancock (online)

Utah Dairy Commissioners absent:

Chet Hansen

Dairy Producers of Utah Board Members present:

Brad Bateman, Dean Blackhurst, Shane Munk, Jim Withers

Dairy Producers of Utah Board Members absent:

Bruce Clark, Charlie Hansen, Russ Otten, Clint Wade

Others present:

Mike Kohler, Steve Doxey, Jenny Nelson, Steve Seppi, Bryce Chambers, Travis Waller, Amanda Price, Rick Naerebout, Pete Wiersma, Hank Hafliger, Ted Vander Schaaf

Call to Order

Chairman David Roberts called the UDC meeting to order at 1:09 PM MT.

Roll was taken and a quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Roberts called for any amendments to the agenda and if none, a motion to approve. Commissioner Daniel Buttars moved to approve the agenda without amendment. Commissioner Sheila Sherwood seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Checkoff Updates from Dairy West

Steve Seppi, formerly of Dairy Farmers of Washington, was announced as the new CEO of Dairy West in June. Both Washington and Oregon have directionally approved moving forward in partnership with Dairy West pending review and final approval. This expansion would make Dairy West a four-state region, aiming to enhance efficiency and programming while reducing duplication. Dairy West is aiming for a contract for services by January 2026. With this expansion there is an expectation of larger, more impactful region-wide programming with a reallocation of funds toward new programming efforts focused on exports, business development, and collaboration with processor partners. Mr. Seppi plans to spend the next 6 months improving internal efficiencies and preparing the team for changes in structure before 2026. He also stressed the importance of maintaining local producers' identities while achieving efficiency and scale benefits. He intends to further his understanding of regional dairy farms and processors by visiting farms and attending meetings like IMPA to foster partnerships.

Jenny Nelson (Strategic Advisor, Dairy West) is transitioning to a strategic role reporting to the Dairy West Board of Directors. Ms. Nelson shared a proposal that aims to establish a for-profit dairy innovation center for commercializing research. Initial funding is expected from Dairy West, with a phased approach to development. Legal review is underway to ensure these activities do not jeopardize Dairy West's status as a 501(c)(6) non-profit entity. The proposed innovation center will be structured as an agricultural co-op, allowing farmers to be direct financial beneficiaries. There are plans to form a separate board of directors for the center, specifically drawing from Idaho and Utah, as a means to ensure regional stakeholder investment and oversight. Funding for the initiative will initially come from Dairy West, redirected from underspent marketing budgets, with a request for up to \$100,000 for legal and strategic costs this year.

Dairy Producers of Utah Updates

Travis Waller (Director of Regulatory Services, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF)) said that the UDAF is considering changes to raw milk regulations, aiming to reduce state costs while proposing registration requirements and higher penalties for non-compliance. The Department intends to make raw milk producers responsible for covering regulatory costs, currently over \$130,000 funded internally from other areas. There is contemplation of legislative proposals to increase regulatory fines for non-compliant raw milk producers. Current fines are deemed insufficient. Board members expressed the need for public notification when a raw milk producer's operations result in health issues.

Dr. Amanda Price (Utah State Veterinarian) discussed global concerns such as Screwworms, bird flu, and the use of mRNA vaccines in livestock. Dr. Price shared there has been a recent surge of screwworm cases originating from Panama, moving north into Mexico, and approaching the U.S. border, raising concerns about movement restrictions and potential infestations in the United States. There was discussion around managing starlings affecting the dairy and poultry industries, considering cost-effective measures and collaboration with USDA on existing credits.

IDA - Regional approach to Federal Policy Engagement

Rick Naerebout (CEO, Idaho Dairywomen's Association (IDA)) discussed with the room a regional approach to federal policy engagement. Mr. Naerebout discussed the possibility of forming a policy coalition to handle federal work among states. He emphasized the need for local representation when advocating in Washington, D.C., highlighting the importance of having representatives from the concerned states present and clarified that existing Congressional relationships need not be disrupted or replaced, but enhanced through the coalition's strategy.

Open Discussion

There was discussion around U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Clarification was sought on the rights and protocols when dealing with ICE inquiries at workplaces, specifically concerning warrants and access to private areas. Board members discussed the political climate affecting immigration reform and expressed skepticism regarding legislative negotiations due to current political and administrative dynamics. Some expressed concerns about rising labor costs and potential changes to immigration policies impacting workforce availability.

Adjourn

Chairman Roberts called for a motion to adjourn the Joint Utah Dairy Commission and Dairy Producers of Utah meeting. Commissioner Brad Bateman moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Chace Fullmer seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM MT.

Chairman/Vice Chairman

Secretary