

GAC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

GAC spoke with Farrah Newberry of Georgia Milk Producers (GMP), a producer advocacy organization that represents our states 130 dairy farms. She has served as the Executive Director for twenty years, and proudly represents our state's dairy farm families, organizes events, workshops and meetings, and advocates across the Southeast for sound dairy policy and environmental regulations. She also organizes many fundraisers for the Georgia Dairy Youth Foundation which financially supports dairy youth programs in 4-H, FFA and at the collegiate level.



COVID-19 has been devastating for the dairy industry with the loss of 50 percent of their market when schools and restaurant shuttered. Because of this, Georgia dairy farmers were forced to dump 100 milk tankers loads in March and April - worth close to \$1 million. However, financial impact of COVID-19 on the industry will not be felt until June and July. Dairy is currently seeing a rebound in futures prices for the last quarter of 2020 with hope that it continues.

To combat this, Georgia Milk Producers is working with dairy industry stakeholders to make sure that the dairy industry will receive emergency payments from USDA under the Corona Food Assistance Program. They are encouraging producers to purchase insurance to diminish risk and volatility in the future. USDA is also purchasing and donating milk to food banks during the pandemic, which helps to move the perishable product off the shelves and feed those in need.

As the industry moves forward, especially in the next two months, it is important to monitor the physical and mental health of farmers. GMP developed a Farmer to Farmer Program, which allows farmers to talk to fellow farmers in times of stress and seek support. The financial losses and other conditions, most which are out of their control, are greatly impacting the health of dairy producers. GMP wants them to know that they are not alone and can reach out to someone if needed. The farmer is the most important asset on the farm.

We appreciate Farrah and Georgia Milk Producer's advocacy around the state for the dairy industry!

