



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 29, 2016

Contact: Danielle Endvick, 715.471.0398 or [dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com)

# **Wisconsin Farmers Union sends survey on low dairy prices**

CHIPPEWA FALLS – Dairy farmers across Wisconsin are opening their mailboxes this week to find an unexpected envelope. “Share your opinion on the low dairy prices!” The outside reads. The envelope contains a Wisconsin Dairy Producers Survey that is destined for every dairy farm in the state of Wisconsin, inviting farmers to join the conversation about how to improve milk prices over the long haul.

Wisconsin Farmers Union developed the survey to gather input from Wisconsin dairy farmers on different options for dairy pricing reform. “According to the National Ag Statistics Service, we have lost an average of a dairy farm every day in 2016 here in the state of Wisconsin,” said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. “With the price of milk below the cost of production, farms large and small are losing money every time they send a load of milk down the road. No other business thinks that operating at a loss is a normal state of affairs, and we shouldn’t either.”

Von Ruden urged dairy farmers to complete the survey right away and return it in the envelope provided. “I’m a dairy farmer myself, so I know you’re busy, but please take 10 minutes to answer the survey and be part of the solution,” he said. “If we as dairy farmers don’t step up and try to improve the situation for ourselves and our neighbors, then who will?”

All individual survey responses will be kept confidential. WFU does plan to compile all of the responses together in order to explain the current dairy crisis to the public and state and federal policy leaders. “It’s one thing to say, ‘times are tough in America’s Dairyland,’ but it’s more influential if we can back that up with some hard numbers,” Von Ruden said. “Members of our WFU dairy committee have told us that their pay prices are not keeping up with the cost of production, that they are paying higher transportation fees to ship their milk, that their land rents are increasing, and that the Margin Protection Program has done little to help in this time of low prices. We want to see whether these trends are widespread throughout the state.”

In conclusion, Von Ruden urged dairy farmers to make their voice heard. “We hope that every dairy farmer in the state will open up that envelope and fill out the survey – every response counts.”

The return deadline for the survey is Aug. 31, and WFU hopes to have the results compiled by early fall.

*Photo by Erik Daily/La Crosse Tribune: Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden on his Westby, WI dairy farm.*

###