



Steve Lucas, CEO

## WE SALUTE OUR DAIRY FARMERS

The dairy industry is important to all of Wisconsin—this is the Dairy State, after all—but it plays an especially big role here in Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative service territory. We live in a part of the state where agriculture is the dominant industry, and dairy farming is the major component of that industry in all three counties we serve.

According to the latest figures from UW-Extension, agriculture provides a quarter of Grant County's jobs and contributes \$428 million to Grant County income. In Crawford County, agriculture provides 35 percent of all jobs and contributes \$55 million to the county income. In Lafayette County, agriculture provides a whopping 58 percent of all jobs and contributes \$323 million to county income.

These are just some of the tangible reasons why we support and promote the dairy industry, especially during June Dairy Month. But there are intangible reasons to be proud of our dairy industry too, and that's something you can best understand by actually visiting a dairy farm and seeing for yourself what it's all about. Farming is a lot of work, yes, but you'd be hard pressed to find a farmer who doesn't also believe that it's a great way of life.

You'll have a chance to see that for yourself by attending one of the annual June Dairy Breakfasts held in each of the

counties we serve. This year, we are especially proud that all three of the host farms are located on SREC lines. You can learn a little more about these farms and the families that run them on the following pages.

We thank the Steger, Roper-Shippy, and Fischer families for graciously agreeing to open up their farms so others can fill up on an old-fashioned farm breakfast and learn a little bit about the dairy industry. We are proud to have you as members. We salute you and all the other farmers who play such an important role in our lives, all year long.

### Summer Shift

June also marks the beginning of our Summer Shift campaign. Our electricity demand and the regional market's power prices are highest on summer weekdays between the hours of 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Any effort you can make to curb your electricity use during these hours helps us control our costs by lowering the demand charges for these peak hours.

We are not asking you to make unreasonable, uncomfortable adjustments such as going without air conditioning on the hottest days of summer. But you'd be surprised how little measures, such as waiting until after 7 p.m. to recharge your cell phone or shifting some laundry to the weekends, can make a big difference in our demand charges. This in turn leads to cost savings for all members. We appreciate your help.

## LAST CHANCE TO SIGN UP FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

There's still time for member high school students to sign up for the Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) July 26–28 at UW-River Falls. This is a dynamic event for teens across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning about the cooperative form of business and sampling college life. It's filled with team-building exercises, hands-on learning activities that teach the co-op difference, and sessions led by renowned motivational speakers. The program is planned by teens who were elected to the 2016–17 youth board.

Register by  
June 26!

This opportunity is open to students entering grades 10, 11, or 12 next fall whose parents or grandparents are members of SREC. Registration costs are covered by Wisconsin's electric cooperatives; SREC will even provide transportation to and from UW-River Falls.

Interested students should contact Heidi at SREC, 608-723-2121 or 800-236-2141, or hpierce@srec.net.



### MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH

The winning photo from SREC's Member Photo Contest for May was taken by Rhonda Wiedenbeck of Lancaster. If you're a shutterbug yourself, please share your pictures with us by entering the 2017 Member Photo Contest, which runs until August 21. Winning photos will appear in our 2018 member calendar. Visit our website, [www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop), for contest details and downloadable forms.



# SREC members host June Dairy Breakfasts

June is recognized nationwide as Dairy Month, a time to pay tribute to the dairy industry and its important role in our lives. But here in Wisconsin—where dairy is the largest segment of the agriculture industry and cheese reigns supreme—Dairy Month is more than just an observation. It’s a full-out celebration, with fun-filled events like the annual on-the-farm dairy breakfasts held in most counties in the state.

At Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, there’s even more reason to celebrate this year, as each of the June Dairy Breakfasts held in the co-op’s three-county service territory is being hosted by a SREC member farm.

## Crawford County

The Crawford County Dairy Breakfast will be held Saturday, June 3, at Steger Farms in Prairie du Chien. This event features a hearty breakfast of pancakes, sausages, lots of cheese, applesauce, and pudding. This is also a rare occasion when it’s perfectly acceptable—and even encouraged—to enjoy a Culver’s custard or shake for breakfast.

The Crawford County Dairy Breakfast also offers a chance for guests to experience life on a traditional family farm. Owned and operated by brothers Terry and Tim Steger as well as Tim’s wife, Char, and their daughters, Jessie and Emily, Steger Farms has dairy and beef cows on neighboring properties. The farm also has 300 tillable acres of corn, oats, and alfalfa. The Stegers milk 60 cows and keep 30 cross-bred beef cows.

The Steger brothers do most of the farm work themselves; they’ve been farming together since 1982, and they bought

their current farm from their father in 1985. Char helps out and also works off the farm.

This will be the family’s fifth turn at hosting the dairy breakfast. It’s a big commitment, but Tim said the fleet of volunteers makes the workload much lighter, including set-up and clean-up.

“We’re shooting for about 2,500 people and they all come through the breakfast line in four hours, but by about noon you wouldn’t even know anyone was here,” he marveled.

Also, he enjoys meeting the guests, both longtime friends and first-time visitors. Prairie du Chien attracts a lot of tourists in the summer; some make their way to the dairy breakfast after seeing posters around the city. Tim said some of these families end up staying a couple of hours as they explore the farm. He welcomes the opportunity to show these folks what farming is about.

“You get the people out here that bring their grandkids, who maybe don’t live on a farm, and they’re telling them how cows are milked and bringing them into the barn to see,” he said. “To see a little kid crawl up on our tractor and get his picture taken and he’s on top of the world, well, that’s great.”



The Steger family is hosting the Crawford County Dairy Breakfast. From left to right are Terry, Emily, Jessica, Tim, and Char. They’re standing with Harley (cow) and Zeke (dog). Jessica is a sophomore at UW-River Falls, majoring in ag business and dairy science, and Emily is a senior at Prairie du Chien High School, with plans to major in ag business at UW-Platteville next fall.



The Shippy family will be welcoming guests to their Century Farm for the Lafayette County Dairy Breakfast. Seated in the picture at left, left to right, are daughter Carrie (engaged to Travis), Dennis, and Mary. Back row, left to right, are son Steve and his wife, Mary, grandson Jacob, and son Scott and his wife, Amy.

## Lafayette County

Tradition will be on display at the Lafayette County Dairy Breakfast as well. This event will be held Saturday, June 10, at the Roper-Shippy Family Farm in Gratiot, a Century Farm that's been owned and operated by a member of the Roper family since 1898. Hosts are current owners Denny and Mary Shippy. Mary is the third-generation Roper to own the farm; she's lived on the property for almost 65 years.

"We are very grateful to my mom and dad for giving us the opportunity to keep this farm going and try to keep the property in the family," Mary said.

The Shippys no longer keep cows at the farm, although at one time they milked about 90 cows. They currently rent about 500 acres of cropland.

However, visitors to the Lafayette County Dairy Breakfast will be able to see young calves, as a petting zoo is part of the festivities. Other planned activities include music by the Fever River String Band, face painting and balloons, a pedal tractor pull, a Lafayette County Nurses Booth, and presentation of the Lafayette County Land Conservation awards. And of course, there's breakfast: scrambled eggs with ham and cheese, sau-

sage links, donuts, cheese, pudding, milk, juice, coffee cake, and even strawberry ice cream sundaes.

This will be the Shippys' first turn at hosting the dairy breakfast; the preparation has been made easier, they say, thanks to help from family members and the Lafayette County Dairy Promotion Committee.

"We're just very grateful for all the help we've had, and to the Dairy Promotion Board for helping us to organize this whole thing," Mary said.

The Shippys look forward to meeting with guests at the breakfast; they're expecting a crowd of about 2,500.

"We welcome everyone and anyone," Denny said. "The more, the merrier."

## Grant County

The Grant County Dairy Breakfast on Sunday, June 11, will mark a return to tradition as it will be held on a family farm instead of the Grant County Fairgrounds for the first time in many years. The Todd & Julie Fischer Family Farm in Bagley will host the event. Guests will still be served the traditional pancake breakfast, topped off with ice cream, and familiar



Todd and Julie Fischer and their four children are hosting the Grant County Dairy Breakfast. Left to right are Marty, Jessica, Julie, Todd, Christine, and Zach.

MY CO-OP



activities such as an antique machinery display, free blood-pressure checks, and announcement of the Farm Family of the Year will still be held. But this year, guests will also have a chance for some hands-on learning about farm life.

“To me, that’s what the dairy breakfast is all about,” Todd said. “It’s that one opportunity we have once a year to bring people out on a farm, and I think it’s so important. It’s a chance to show people what farming is about. You can really open their eyes a little bit.”

The Fischers keep about 800 cows between two properties, including the farm in Fennimore that Todd first bought in 1994 and that he still owns. The Bagley farm, which the Fischers purchased 10 years ago, is where most of the milking occurs; the farm also has 1,800 crop acres. The property is ideally suited for hosting a large crowd; plenty of on-site parking will be available, and the concrete connecting the various barns and structures means the farm will be navigable even if it rains.

Todd said he plans to adjust the normal milking hours on June 11 so guests will have a chance to watch a milking. Visitors will also be free to walk through some of the other buildings, including the calf barns and the machinery shed. Todd plans to have friends and volunteers on hand at each building to help explain what’s happening and answer any questions.

“I want as much of the farm open as possible, so that people can see everything,” he said. “I hope people ask a lot of questions.”

Fischer’s own passion for farming started when he was very young, although he didn’t grow up on a farm. He



A highlight of an on-the-farm dairy breakfast is a chance to pet calves. At the Fischer farm, guests will be able to walk through two calf barns.

did, however, visit his grandparents’ farm when he was a child, and he knew right away that’s what he wanted to do.

“I’d come home and tell my Mom, ‘Please don’t wash my clothes yet because I want to smell the farm,’” he said.

His love of farming never dimmed. A school newspaper article reported this about an eighth-grade Fischer: “He would like to spend a tax-free gift of a million dollars on a farm. For his career choice he would like to be a farmer.”

He started with 30 cows and a partnership with another farmer, eventually purchasing his own farm in Fennimore and later adding the farm in Bagley.

“Very few people get to say they’re living their dream,” he said. “To know what you want to do and then to be able to actually do it is kind of a cool thing.”

Celebrate June Dairy Month this year by heading to one of these family farms for a dairy experience and a hearty breakfast. And ice cream, of course.—*Mary Erickson*

## June Dairy Breakfasts



### Crawford County Dairy Breakfast Saturday, June 3 Steger Farms

60724 Irish Ridge Road, Prairie du Chien  
6–10 a.m.

On-site parking, with shuttle buses running from Blackhawk Junction, 700 E Blackhawk Ave., Prairie du Chien  
Adults \$2, Kids 6–12 \$1, Kids 5 and under free

### Lafayette County Dairy Breakfast Saturday, June 10 Roper-Shippy Family Farm

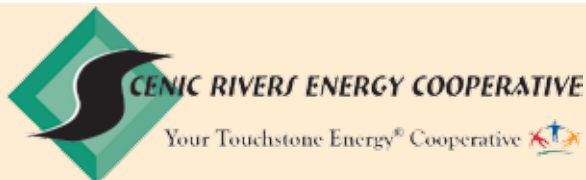
12348 White School Road, Gratiot  
6:30–10:30 a.m.

On-site parking  
Adults \$4, children under 10 \$2, preschool free

### Grant County Dairy Breakfast Sunday, June 11 Todd & Julie Fischer Family Farm

10690 Maine Road, Bagley  
7–11 a.m.

Adults \$5, children 6–11 \$2, under 6 free  
On-site parking, with shuttle buses from Blakes Prairie Fairgrounds, 570 Mill St., Bloomington



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