



Share Your Story

What's your story? Consumers want to know. You walk the walk every day. Now, it's time to talk the talk. This series will introduce you to the Real Faces of Dairy pledge and provide tips to help you become a better dairy advocate.

Let's Talk Dairy

by Joann Pipkin

Last year Balchem and Dairy Herd Management introduced you to the Real Faces of Dairy celebration. You met the movers and shakers of the industry—the key players in helping you create a sustainable business for the next generation. But, our journey is just beginning. Today's consumers are changing the way we all do business, and they want peace of mind in knowing how their food is produced. Giving consumers a first-hand look inside your dairy not only makes it transparent but also helps them acknowledge the industry and its sustainability.

Why tell your story

Why do you need to tell your story? Why do you need to be a dairy advocate? Today's consumers want to know where their food comes from and who produced it. And, they want to know if it's good—really good—for them and their families.

University of California-Davis Animal Science Professor Frank Mitloehner points out, "Land-grant universities, companies and trade associations are all rallying around

what needs to be done. We are all working to define sustainability and create sustainability programs without creating situations to overwhelm the producer." Today's consumers are environmentally conscious and communication savvy, making it more important than ever for producers to equip them with accurate, consistent information when concerns arise.

We talk a lot about sustainability in agriculture these days, and it is much more than just environmental. A key driver in dairy sustainability lies in the longevity of the industry's workforce. It's a domino effect. If the dairy industry's employees are tuned in to animal care, environmental stewardship and food safety, then it becomes much easier to create a legacy for your family and

community, and ultimately, tell your story to consumers.

While some consumers would love it if food were produced like it was four decades ago, the sheer reality is that back then we only needed half as much food and had twice as many animals. Today's dairy cow is as skilled in production as a well-oiled machine. Yet, consumers need to know your girls are well cared for by keen, seasoned professionals and are out doing their job in an environmentally friendly atmosphere. If you aren't showing consumers what dairy really looks like, then they will only continue to be guided by misinformation that regularly floods mainstream media.

Share your story

Now is the time to get real and take your story straight into the hearts and hands of consumers everywhere. Nobody knows your story better than you. We encourage you to join us and become personally committed to sharing your dairy story through the Real Faces of Dairy pledge. You might be wondering what the pledge is. In reality, it's your personal commitment to share how you farm with your community.



THE
**REAL FACES
OF DAIRY**

BALCHEM™

You are the Real Face of Dairy, the original environmentalist, the first to implement sustainable practices and the most passionate about caring for your animals.

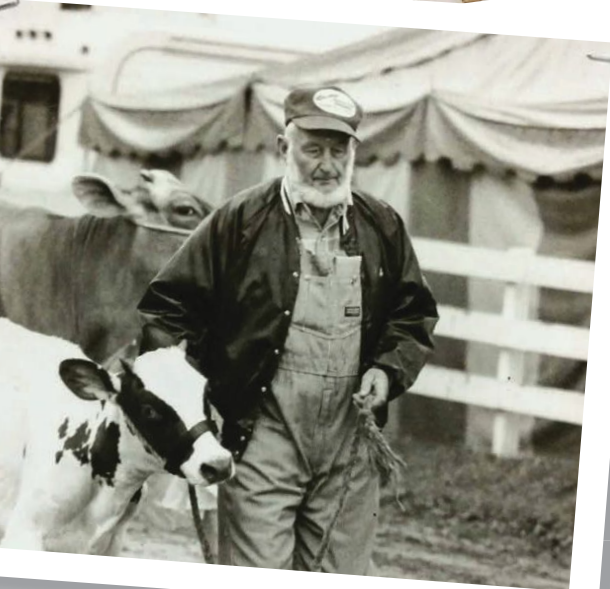
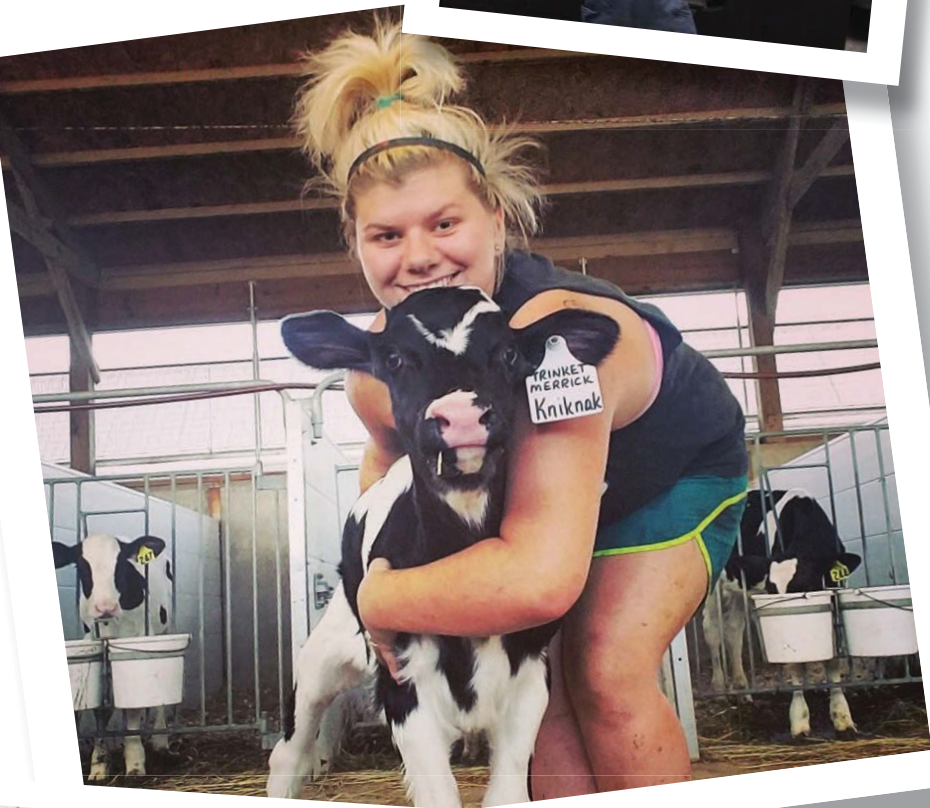
As Balchem celebrates 50 years in service to agriculture, we look to bring the tools you need to share your story with your community and those who want to know you and your farm. Let's work together to bring transparency and understanding.

Be a part of the Real Faces of Dairy celebration and a part of securing the future.

Visit
www.realfacesofdairy.com
and share your photos
on Facebook,
[@RealFacesofDairy](https://www.facebook.com/RealFacesofDairy).

All photos were submitted through the Real Faces of Dairy Facebook page.

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10 Ways to Share Your Dairy Story

- 1. Shift the focus.** By nature, we want to talk about ourselves. But, direct the conversation to the consumer. Connect with their values. Then, you can share why you do what you do.
- 2. Engage in emotion.** Emotions trump rational thought. Allow the consumer to get a real feel for why you're passionate about the dairy industry. Remember to use simple, empathetic messages.
- 3. Provide examples.** Tell consumers what's done on your farm to support them. This is your time for "show and tell." Contact local schools or officials to set up tours of your dairy.
- 4. Concentrate on the "moveable middle."** While a significant number of consumers do not have an opinion, they still have concerns about dairy-farming practices. Don't focus on agenda-driven, anti-dairy groups.
- 5. Take your time.** Establishing trust and building relationships require patience. More than one conversation might be necessary to accomplish that.
- 6. Own your messages.** Practice and personalize those messages to your dairy, family and community. Don't become a talking robot. Be a passionate, heart-felt dairy leader who cares about the consumer.
- 7. Create trust.** Focus on building relationships and quit talking at people. Be positive and share your stories from the heart.
- 8. Be dedicated.** Devote time every week to being a dairy advocate.
- 9. Be active in social media.** If your farm doesn't have a Facebook page, now is the time to start one. Share your photos on the Real Faces of Dairy Facebook page, too, @realfacesofdairy.
- 10. Reach out.** State and regional dairy checkoff organizations have tools and training available to help you in becoming a more effective dairy advocate.

Now, let's talk dairy

Every day, you walk the walk. And now, it's time to talk the talk. Disconnect between producer and consumer only makes it more possible for misinformation and confusion to spread. And, we all know what can happen then.

You can be an effective dairy advocate and frankly, you should be.

Where and how do you begin? Being an advocate is nothing to be anxious about. It's simple. Just talk. Tell your story.

Checkoff support. The dairy checkoff, nationally and locally, can help you tell your story.

Dairy Management Inc. (DMI), which manages the national dairy checkoff, produces a regular e-newsletter that features updates on checkoff activities, and industry news and content to share. To join, send an email to don.schindler@dairy.org.





#realfacesofdairy

The dairy checkoff creates content to tell your story and help dispel myths. Examples include a video series called *The Udder Truth* that sets the record straight on cow care, antibiotics and large farms, with farmers sharing their stories.

In a day and time when Google is the go-to for any question any time, you want consumers to learn the truth about your industry straight from the source. And, that's you.

You want consumers to view the dairy industry as a vital part of their lives. Then, they become advocates for you, your dairy products and your industry. And the legacy lives on.

Walk with Balchem this year as we proudly journey through the Real Faces of Dairy pledge.

Together we'll step through each pillar of the pledge, sharing examples of how other dairy producers are stepping up and bringing you a closer look at how you can connect with consumers through your care for animals and the environment. We'll march through how employee management is a vital link to helping you produce high-quality, healthy dairy products. And, we'll explore how you can connect with consumers as you stay the course in building a lasting legacy for your family and community. Each pillar delivers a new tool you can add to your toolbox as you share positive messages with consumers and your community.

It's time to step up and speak out. Now, let's talk dairy.



Sharing the coloring book with your local elementary school or giving them to groups that visit your dairy is a simple first step in living the Real Faces of Dairy pledge. Copies are available to order or download at:
<http://realfacesofdairy.com/coloring-book-order/>

Some dairy tips and sources available to you:

- dairy.org
- milkmeansmore.org
- dairygood.org
- uddertruth.org



Take the Pledge

Throughout 2017, the Real Faces of Dairy project encourages YOU to take the pledge to share YOUR story with your local community, helping them learn how you carry out these 5 pillars in your dairy operation. Vow to share how you care for your animals, provide a safe work environment, practice environmental stewardship, produce healthy dairy products and leave a legacy. We'd love to see your photos and stories and hear from you. Go to our website for more information.

www.realfacesofdairy.com

