



2021-22 Policy Priorities

Reliable workforce

Dairy farms face a shortage of workers and our farmers have come to rely more on immigrant labor to fill crucial job openings. Unfortunately, there is no way for farmers to protect their existing workforce or any practical process to hire new foreign workers who are legally authorized to work. The current agriculture visa program is outdated and only permits seasonal employment. A multi-year, renewable agricultural worker visa is needed for year-round activities like dairy farming. This new visa should include a component to ensure a legal status for all existing workers and an element to allow for the simple recruitment of new foreign-born workers as needed. Congress must pass an agricultural workforce bill to address the workforce shortages in the dairy community.

Better access to global markets

U.S. dairy farmers are the most efficient in the world in providing safe and wholesome dairy products to the meet the growing nutritional demands around the globe. To meet those demands, the dairy community needs to grow our presence in the international marketplace. Increasing dairy exports to existing and emerging markets ensures higher and more stable prices for our farmers. Edge wants to see the negotiation of new trade agreements with key partners as well as the exploration of potential marketplaces for U.S. dairy products. While we expand our reach to international customers, we must ensure existing trade agreements are implemented as intended as well as protect products from anti-competitive trading practices that obstruct our ability to export.

Farm policy that works for dairy farmers

Federal dairy programs can greatly affect our farmers' ability to earn a living. Dairy risk management programs need to be effective and be feasible for all types of farmers. Farmers want to utilize tools our government provides for success, but it is important these programs do not waste our farmers' or the nation's resources. Edge also wants to explore how the Federal Milk Marketing Orders could be re-evaluated so farmers have a voice and ensure there is a transparent process for pricing. Ultimately, Edge believes federal dairy policy needs to serve all sizes and types of dairy farms to allow them the ability to navigate the marketplace and grow a sustainable farm business.

Farmer-led environmental innovation

Dairy farmers have always been leaders in caring for the environment and they continue to lead in addressing changing climate conditions. Edge stands with our farmers in their commitment to seek effective and financially viable ways to protect and improve water quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We believe environmentally focused policies affecting agriculture should be guided by farmers, grounded in science, driven by the market and sufficiently flexible to allow for innovation at the farm level.

Accurate representation of dairy products

Dairy products are safe, wholesome and nutritious and should be accurately represented to customers as such. Nutritionally inferior plant-based products that are wrongly labeled as milk, cheese or ice cream are increasingly common. While there is room for a variety of products in the marketplace, it is wrong to mislead customers. Some of these non-dairy imitations violate existing labeling laws. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) must enforce the law so customers are protected and dairy farmers are not unfairly disadvantaged, and lawmakers should ensure that FDA takes action. Edge also believes nutritional regulations should be updated to allow customers a wider variety of dairy products in feeding programs. Recent studies are increasingly proving that current nutritional restrictions on fuller-fat dairy products are no longer warranted. Customers should be given the choice of accessing those more nutritionally dense dairy foods.