



Maine Dairy Industry Association
PO Box 5013 | 337 State Street
Augusta, ME 04430

Annie Watson, President
Dale Cole, Vice President
Jason Tessier, Secretary
Heath Miller, Treasurer
Dick Perkins, At Large

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Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Ingwersen, Representative Plueker and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee,

My name is Heath Miller my family has operated a dairy farm in Newburgh since the mid 1800's. We currently milk 200 cows 3 times per day 365 days a year. We farm 600 acres in order to meet the nutritional needs of our herd.

Today I am here representing Maine Dairy Industry Association (MDIA). MDIA represents every dairy farmer in the state of Maine. This includes the smallest to the largest, organic and conventional.

I would like to thank both committees for the support you have already shown this year. The funding for the study that will allow us to adjust costs for our state program is appreciated. We hope to see that completed this fall and will be back in front of you next winter.

Our industry has seen doubling electric bills, increases to feed, labor and parts. Fuel has doubled. Most recently the interest rate. One farmer told me in the last 6 months his interest payment has increased \$12,000. I spoke to another farmer whose electric bill increased \$10,000 his bill is \$35,000. Our Co-ops and processors are all seeing the same increases and passing those fees along to Dairy farmers. We do not have an option to increase the cost of our product. This leaves us extremely vulnerable.

The Dairy infrastructure is a staple in all Maine Ag sectors. Maine simply cannot afford to lose any more dairy farms while we wait for a study to update our support numbers. We will soon be gearing up for another spring. The cost to ready our land for crops is looming over many many farmers.

Today I am urging you to consider a one-time emergency relief payment. We need to get financial support to our farms now.

Thank you
Heath Miller
Maine Dairy Industry Association.