



FOR INFORMATION:

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**World-Leading Advancements in Planet-Smart Dairy Farming on the Agenda for
4th California Dairy Sustainability Summit, March 2024 at UC Davis**

Dairy farmers, policymakers, technology providers, and researchers will convene to promote California's continued leadership in advancing planet-smart dairy farming.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — August 22, 2023 — The [California Dairy Sustainability Summit](#) organizing committee today announced the 4th event will take place March 26, 2024, at the UC Davis Conference Center in Davis, Calif. The summit will host timely discussions as the California dairy sector is on track to achieve climate neutrality by as early as 2027, while providing nutritious foods that contribute to healthy, sustainable food systems. Speakers will highlight progress, policies, and partnerships that are supporting the innovation and advancement of planet-smart dairy farm practices.

“California dairy farms are reducing methane and other climate emissions, while improving the conservation and protection of water, cleaning the air, and investing in efforts to provide the most planet-smart, nutritious, and enjoyable dairy products,” said Charles “Chuck” Ahlem, a dairy farmer and board member for three of the hosting organizations.

The California Dairy Sustainability Summit has been held biennially since 2018—recognizing milestones as the dairy sector makes tremendous strides in reducing its environmental footprint. The Summit is hosted by Dairy Cares, California Dairy Research Foundation (CDRF), California Milk Advisory Board, California Dairy Quality Assurance Program, and the Dairy Council of California. The 2024 program will be the first in-person version of the Summit since 2018. Consistent with previous events, the program will take a comprehensive approach to discussing dairy sustainability.

Highlighting progress in California's evolving dairy methane reductions strategy will be central to the discussion. According to the annual California Climate Investments report, more than 2.2 million tons of methane emissions (CO₂e) are now being reduced annually via dairy methane reduction programs. Using digesters, California dairy farms are concurrently producing enough renewable natural gas and renewable electricity to fuel 3,000 transit buses and 12,000 electric vehicles annually. Methane emissions are also being reduced through alternative manure management projects.

On-farm technologies being adopted through partnership between dairies, private investors, and the state will be showcased. California has invested more than \$2 billion to date in dairy methane reduction efforts. The state is now further advancing with research and incentive funding to reduce enteric methane emissions in the dairy and beef cattle sectors. Additionally, California's new Dairy Plus program will soon award funding for on-farm projects to advance manure management by both reducing methane emissions and improving water quality outcomes. The Dairy Plus program is an effort driven by dairy farmer organizations. The CDRF, in collaboration with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Dairy Cares, and several other California dairy organizations, was awarded \$85 million in



funding by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to create this new initiative, under the USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities program.

In addition to world-leading dairy methane reduction efforts, California dairy farmers are installing solar, electrifying equipment and operations, and increasing energy efficiency. Dairy farmers are also participating in local efforts to ensure safe drinking water, while working toward long-term solutions to better protect groundwater. Additionally, dairy farmers continue to adopt new technologies to further improve water efficiency and conservation.

The Summit's mission is to promote education and collaboration for further advancing planet-smart dairy farm practices and to recognize and enhance dairy's valuable role in sustainable, healthy, and equitable food systems. The event brings together dairy farmers and industry leaders, policymakers, researchers, technology providers, conservation non-governmental organizations, community nutrition experts, and other stakeholders. Emphasis is placed on expansion of highly successful incentives-based strategies and in identifying, developing, and piloting technologies that address multiple environmental challenges. Ultimately, the program aims to ensure the continued strength of California's dairy sector, serving California communities and contributing to global sustainable development goals.

"We are proud to be working with our public and private partners, as we serve as leaders in the development of planet-smart dairy," said dairy farmer Josh Zonneveld, Chairman of the California Dairy Research Foundation. "Continued coordination is essential, as we aim to build upon accomplishments to date, overcome challenges, and ensure our efforts are truly sustainable—environmentally, economically, and socially."

The 2024 Summit will include dynamic presentations, interactive panel discussions, a research poster session, and valuable networking opportunities. Additional participation will be welcomed via a virtual, livestream option. More information about the event program and sponsor opportunities will be announced soon. To learn more or to subscribe for updates, visit www.cadairysummit.com

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- [Dairy Cares](#) is a statewide coalition with a mission to ensure the long-term sustainability of California's dairy farm families through strong environmental stewardship and responsible animal care.
- The [California Dairy Research Foundation](#) (CDRF) is an independent non-profit organization that leads and delivers research and science-based programs to support an innovative and sustainable California dairy industry.
- For more 25 years, the award-winning [California Dairy Quality Assurance Program](#) (CDQAP) has worked as a partnership between the dairy industry, academia, and others to provide science-based education and third-party certifications, promoting the health of consumers, the environment, and the health and welfare of dairy animals.
- The [California Milk Advisory Board](#), an instrumentality of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, is funded by the state's dairy farm families who lead the nation in sustainable



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dairy farming practices. With a vision to nourish the world with the wholesome goodness of Real California Milk, the CMAB's programs focus on increasing demand for California's sustainable dairy products in the state, across the U.S. and around the world.

- [Dairy Council of California](#) is a nutrition organization working together with champions to elevate the health of children and communities through lifelong healthy eating patterns. Focusing on education and advocacy, dairy ag literacy, and collaboration, we advance the health benefits of milk and dairy foods as part of the solution to achieving nutrition security and sustainable food systems.