The Farmer’s Share

Did you know that farmers and ranchers receive only 14.8* cents of every food dollar that consumers spend? According to the USDA, off farm costs including marketing, processing, wholesaling, distribution and retailing account for more than 80 cents of every food dollar spent in the United States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Farmer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacon 1 lb.</td>
<td>$4.66</td>
<td>$0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Sirloin Steak 1 lb.</td>
<td>$12.99</td>
<td>$1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread 2 lbs.</td>
<td>$4.59</td>
<td>$0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Carrots 5 lbs.</td>
<td>$4.59</td>
<td>$1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer 6-pack cans</td>
<td>$8.99</td>
<td>$0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal 18 oz. box</td>
<td>$3.49</td>
<td>$0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes 1 lb.</td>
<td>$4.59</td>
<td>$0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs 1 dozen</td>
<td>$2.29</td>
<td>$1.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour King Arthur, 5 lbs.</td>
<td>$4.39</td>
<td>$0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boneless Ham 1 lb.</td>
<td>$3.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lettuce 1 lb.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milk 1 gallon, fat free</td>
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<td>$1.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fresh Apples Granny Smith, 1 lb.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fresh Potatoes Russet, 5 lbs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soda 2 liters</td>
<td>$1.19</td>
<td>$0.05</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Farmer’s share derived from USDA, NASS “Agricultural Prices,” 2018 | Prices based on January 2019 data.
Retail prices based on Safeway (SE) brand except where noted. | *Figure according to U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service

March 14, 2019
Painted Prairie Vineyard adds tasting room

Rural Currie business producing array of wines

By Julie Buntjer
jbuntjer@dglobe.com

CURRIE — Nestled on a gravel road a little northwest of Dovray is the Painted Prairie Vineyard — the perfect name for an idyllic rural setting where grapevines grow in rows, waterfowl frolic in the nearby marsh and harvest means churning plump red and green grapes into wines.

In late December, Painted Prairie Vineyard opened its new tasting room, kitchen and production space, all under one roof. The tasting room features seating for up to 125 guests and offers a beautiful setting for wedding receptions, parties and gatherings.

“The shell went up in the spring of 2017, but for close to a year this was a dirt floor shed,” said Krista Kopperud, who — along with her husband, Andy — have owned the vineyard since 2015. “In June 2018, we started with full-on construction to finish the inside. That took about six months from start to finish.”

The vineyard was closed for 14 months during the construction project, which meant no wine could be served on site.

“We have the wine from that season that we just started selling now,” Krista shared.

While the building is completed, the work isn’t finished. The Kopperuds plan to begin work on an outdoor patio, which will double the capacity of their business. A large fire pit area is already in place.

The tasting room has been a great new addition to the vineyard, but the Kopperuds are equally excited about their new work space for processing their grapes into wine.

“Up until this point, all of the winemaking was in our garage,” Krista said. The new processing room is large enough to accommodate the winemaking, bottling and storage needs.

While the 2018 grape crop is still in its fermentation process, the Kopperuds will soon begin bottling it.

PaintedPrairie: Page 8

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**Tips for safe handling of treated seed**

Research conducted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, for example, detected residues of neonicotinoids (a commonly seed treatment) in the livers of hunter-harvested sharp-tailed grouse and greater prairie chickens. Spills should also be cleaned up to minimize exposure to people, particularly children.

- **Wear the proper personal protective equipment (PPE)** when handling treated seed. Most seed tag labels will state that a long-sleeve shirt, long pants and chemical-resistant gloves must be worn at a minimum when handling treated seed.

- **Take care of any spills immediately.** Clean up or cover up spills with soil (refer to the seed tag label for specifics) as the seed treatment may be hazardous to birds and other wildlife, or to fish and aquatic invertebrates.

- **Avoid generating dust when handling treated seed and working with planting equipment.** To reduce risk to pollinators, avoid filling or cleaning out planters near flowering vegetation, including woody shrubs and trees. Use low drift compounds in the planter instead of talc/graphite, clean and properly maintain planting equipment, watch wind speed and direction, and use technologies to reduce dust drift.

- **Be aware of any replant, rotational, grazing and feeding restrictions.** Depending on the product used, there may be limitations on what crop can be planted in a replant situation, or if a cover crop planted in the area could be grazed or used for feed or forage.

- **Only use a particular product(s).** Be familiar with any restrictions listed on the seed bag label before you use the seed.

- **Properly dispose of leftover treated seed.** The best and most preferred method is to plant out leftover seed, although there may be restrictions on the planting rate and/or depth. Burial may be allowed, but avoid burial next to water sources. Seeding for wildlife habitat is also a possibility when allowed on the seed bag label. Do not compost treated seed and never burn treated seed in a stove that is used in the home, farm shop, etc.

- **DO NOT allow treated seed to enter the food or feed chain.** Treated seed is not to be used for food, feed or oil processing, and care must be taken to not contaminate grain going into the food or feed market. There is ZERO tolerance for treated seed in the export market, meaning that a single seed could result in the rejection of an entire load.

For more information on the safe handling of treated seed, check out the U of MN fact sheet on this topic at: http://z.umn.edu/seed-treatment. The American Seed Trade Association has also developed resources for farmers related to the safe handling of treated seed, available at: https://seed-treatment-guide.com/resources/ for-farmers/

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**HEADS UP**

**POWER LINES ARE HOT!**

Coming in contact with overhead power lines can be deadly. Today’s farm machinery is bigger and taller, making the danger of working around electric lines greater than ever. Spring can be the most dangerous time of all.

**Make sure all family members understand these rules:**

- Utility lines are uninsulated. Don’t let your body become a direct link to the ground or the result could be fatal.

- Know the clearance height of all farm equipment. To be safe, keep all objects at least 10 feet away from overhead lines.

- NEVER attempt to raise or move a power line. If you’re operating equipment that touches a line, stay where you are and have someone call the utility.

- If you must leave the equipment, jump as far as you can so that no part of your body touches the equipment and the ground at the same time.
Elbers debuts as new beef ambassador

By Leah Ward
lward@dglobe.com

STEEN — Whitney Elbers, 16, of Steen is this year’s new beef ambassador for the Rock-Nobles Cattlemen’s Association. Elbers joins Hannah Kruse of rural Ellsworth as co-ambassadors.

Now a junior in high school, Elbers has been showing calves since sixth grade. Her new responsibility means she represents the association and the industry for the next year. She will attend parades (like Buffalo Days, Friendship Days and the beef feed at the Rock County Fair) and hand out ribbons at the county fair.

Elbers describes her role as “getting the word out about the beef industry,” which is particularly important “for city people,” she said. “Maybe they don’t know what beef is, so we teach them.”

Elbers said in her ag classes in school, she is surprised at the things some people don’t know — for example, the difference between a bull and steer.

Elbers was raised around beef cattle, so she has just always known how the industry works. Her position as beef ambassador will allow her to educate not only her peers, but others who don’t have the same experience and are interested in learning.

She will also serve as an advocate. Beef prices are down right now, so Elbers encourages more people to support her family’s livelihood by eating beef.

Elbers knows firsthand how difficult it can be to raise cattle. Her dad custom feeds, and she has noticed that when new cattle arrive, they might have come from different conditions and may not be used to the Minnesota climate. That can present a challenge in helping cattle stay healthy.

Each year, Elbers breaks and shows a calf at the county fair and the state fair.

“You never know what your steer is going to be like,” she said. “It’s different every year.”

This year, her steer is a shorthorn plus named Romeo. Elbers describes Romeo’s disposition as “adventurous” — he’s ready to go as soon as she puts on his harness.

Elbers has put Romeo on a special diet, a mix of Precon and Show-Rite.

“It’s sweet, so he’ll like to eat it,” Elbers said.

Getting to know her calf is Elbers’s favorite part of showing.

Elbers’s experience in 4-H and FFA has taught her a lot about the challenges farmers face.

Last year, she was able to attend the 4-H Day on the Hill in Washington. Elbers listened to the issues being discussed by national politicians — for example, water runoff creating problems for farmers. She heard plans for how to solve such woes.

“It was a really cool experience,” Elbers said, adding that participating in the national conversation about agriculture helped contextualize local challenges of southwest Minnesota farmers.

This past winter brought some unique obstacles for Elbers due to the extreme cold and record-breaking snowfall.

Whitney Elbers and her show calf, Romeo.

“With all the snow, it’s been a struggle to get around the farm,” Elbers said. She noted that her family also debated where to dispose of all the snow.

The cold also made it difficult to keep all the water fountains thawed.

Elbers said her firsthand farm experience has taught her to work hard and will help her for the rest of her life.

Elbers is also involved in basketball and volleyball. She has begun considering where she would like to attend college, and plans to become a nurse.

“My mom’s a nurse, and I have always looked up to her,” Elbers said.

She hopes her experience as a Beef Ambassador will display her leadership skills to potential college admissions officers and employers.
Help available to beef producers dealing with winter weather, flooding

ORANGE CITY, Iowa

Cold and wet weather are challenging beef producers. Cows are calving earlier than expected. Calf birthweights have been heavier than normal. And, producers report an increase in the number of cows having twins.

Producers will need to hone their calving management. This includes checking anticipated calving dates and penning cows seven to 10 days earlier than normal. Have all calving supplies ready and be prepared to assist cows at calving.

With twins, it may be necessary to bottle feed the smaller twin. If possible, obtain colostrum from the calf’s mother or an older cow in the herd. If this is not possible, there are colostrum replacers that can be purchased. For biosecurity reasons, do not obtain colostrum from animals outside the herd.

Calf diarrhea is more prevalent this year, and sanitation is absolutely key. Keep calves clean and dry and cow udders as clean as possible. If there is an outbreak of diarrhea, work with your local veterinarian to identify the cause of the diarrhea and to develop an appropriate treatment plan.

Plan ahead for the breeding season. With extreme cold, a lot of bulls developed frostbite scabbing on the scrotum, which may affect fertility. A breeding soundness exam should be conducted on the bull 30 to 45 days prior to breeding turnout to determine if the bull is fertile.

Feedlot producers also had their share of challenges. Extreme cold reduced average daily gain, impaired feed efficiency and increased the number days to reach market weight — all adding to cost of gain.

Rain and snow melt are filling manure storage basins, with many close to topping out. Feedlot producers are encouraged to call the local Department of Natural Resources office to visit about the levels in their manure storage structure and possible measures to mitigate full basins.

If flooding is a concern, the Iowa Beef Center has a wealth of resources to aid beef producers in recovery. This information may be accessed at iowabeefcenter.org. Iowa State University has a similar set of resources to aid farmers and homeowners at extension.iastate.edu/disasterrecovery/flooding.

For one-on-one assistance with flood-related questions, please contact your local county Extension Office. For beef questions, please feel free to contact me at (712) 737-4230 or e-mail doranb@iastate.edu.

The good news — spring is here, the grass is greening and the calves are playing. Remember to “cownt” your blessings every day!
Dundee’s Salentiny travels to Malaysia, the Philippines

Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council leads trip to meet buyers of U.S. grown beans

By Julie Buntjer
jbuntjer@dgllobe.com

DUNDEE — A Dundee woman was among four Minnesota soybean farmers to travel to Malaysia and the Philippines last month on an international marketing and leadership experience through the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council.

Margie Salentiny, who with her husband, Steve, operate a family farm northeast of Dundee, in Murray County, experienced her first MSR&PC-sponsored trip to see how soybeans are processed and used in the Asian nations.

The 12-day trip, March 17-29, included visits with potential soybean buyers, tours of soybean processing facilities and a visit to an aquaculture operation, where processed soy is fed to the fish.

“We had a very full agenda,” Salentiny said. “We did go to the port and see where the (soybeans) came in and where they’re housed, and from there, where they’re processed into pellets and feed for poultry and pork.

“It was kind of wild to see aquaculture and the pellets and crumbles,” she added, noting the operation raised tilapia and milk fish.

The Minnesota contingent landed first in the Philippines for a series of tours. In addition to seeing soy processing businesses, it also visited a flour mill and pasta-making facility where spaghetti was being made.

“We have the soybeans and we’re so happy and ready to ship them over, but there are so many governmental layers going on at the same time.”

— MARGIE SALENTINY, Farmer

A soy milk facility was also toured, where Salentiny said soymilk is added to milk to stretch the supply for consumers.

“It was a different product than I’ve had in the U.S. — it was smoother, creamier and richer. It was good, but I still like my milk,” she said. “We’re very lucky to live where we live. At the same time, they have access to fresh fruits, vegetables and fish. Their diet is different. It takes our protein to make protein in other countries.”

The soybean growers stayed with host families during their visit to Malaysia and then returned to Manilla, Philippines to attend a U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) Ag Supply Chain Asia Conference with representatives from several other Midwest states.

Salentiny, a six-year board member and current secretary of the Murray County Corn and Soybean Growers, said the trip will be with her forever. Her goal in taking part was to better understand where U.S.-grown soybeans and soybean meal goes and how other countries use and process soybeans, and that is exactly what happened.

“If you don’t go over there and experience the culture and what goes on every day, you don’t understand the magnitude of what you’re dealing with,” Salentiny said. “(The experience) gave me better insight on how they live and what it is I can do to help them.”

MARGIE SALENTINY: Page 13
We came out and fell in love, and the rest is history.

– KRISTA KOPPERUD, Owner

Andy and Krista Kopperud are shown in the vineyard and making it into this incredible space,” Krista said, adding that Painted Prairie Vineyard opened in 2011. When the Hausen opted to relocate to Kansas City for work, the vineyard went up for sale.

“We had been looking to move out into the country after living in Westbrook,” Krista said, adding that friends had encouraged them to see the site.

The Kopperuds moved to the acreage in July 2014 and began caring for the 1.5-acre vineyard that grows LaCrescent, Frontenac and Marquette — all cold-hardy grape varieties developed by the University of Minnesota.

It took a full year before they completed all of the paperwork and received their license to open a winery.

“Both of us were working full time and trying to navigate (the process),” Krista said. She worked in health care for 17 years before recently leaving to manage the winery full-time. Andy, meanwhile, is a physician in Westbrook.

Not long after their licensure was finalized, Krista said they learned of changes being made in state rules regarding winery inspection. The changes meant they would need to do major renovations to the barn they’d been using as their tasting room in order to stay in business.

“That began a new conversation,” she said. “Here we were, we jumped into the wine industry. You put a lot of time, energy and resources into it and neither of us had the heart to walk away. We thought there was so much opportunity in the region — we thought this was a way to support small business.

“We made the jump and decided to put up a new building,” she added. “This is a whole new learning curve for us.”

The Kopperuds consider themselves “newbies” in the winemaking business, and Krista said their learning will never quit. They are still learning how to grow grapes better, and they’re continually trying new things in the winemaking process.

Andy is the “wine guru” of the operation, and Krista said they often joke that his bi-chemistry knowledge from medical school is paying off, as winemaking is basically “a huge chemistry project.”

“The grapes are going to change every year depending on the weather,” Krista said. “You can perfect the recipe, but how it tastes in the end will be a little bit different.”

“If you go into a winery and find a bottle that you love, you have to buy a case, because if you come back next year, it will just be different.”

Painted Prairie Vineyard offers a variety of dry and sweet wines, as well as some fruit wines and a hard apple cider.

Their wine list features 2017 Frontenac and Frontenac Reserve, Marquette, Frontenac Blanc, Frontenac Rosé, Prairie Plum, Painted Apple and Prairie Apple; as well as 2016 Frontenac Gris. Their Painted Apple and Prairie Apple wines, as well as Kopper Cider, are created with locally grown apples from Stonegate Orchard in Slayo.

The Marquette and Frontenac wines are made from Painted Prairie Vineyard grapes, while the Frontenac Blanc grapes came from a vineyard near Storden and the Frontenac Gris grapes from the Hinterland Vineyard near Clara City.

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**PAINTED PRAIRIE**

From Page 8

“We’re expanding the amount of wine we’re producing and purchased from five grape orchards last year, plus Stonegate Orchard in Slayton,” Krista said. “We’re producing about 7,500 bottles of wine, and we hope to grow it up to 10,000 bottles. For a small winery that started with 3,000 to 4,000 bottles, it sounds crazy.”

As awareness of the vineyard expands and more special events are hosted at the new facility, the goal is to sustain the winery at 10,000 bottles produced annually.

While weddings and wedding receptions are already being booked into 2020, the Kopperuds are also booking birthday parties and other events. The vineyard hosted a chamber event and wine and fashion event earlier this month. It will also host a handmade, vintage and wine event July 20 to include vendors from across the region with their handmade items for sale. The event will include live music and food.

“We’re doing a lot of really cool stuff,” Krista said. “We’re focusing on the summer and trying to come up with some creative things for people to come up and check out.”

While the new facility includes a kitchen, Krista said there aren’t plans to have a full restaurant.

“We’re set up as a catering kitchen, so we can do some food prep,” she said. “Having a food truck and partnering with local places to provide food is definitely in the future.”

For now, the Kopperuds offer their wines, as well as a selection of meat sticks from a grass-fed farm near Canby, cheese trays and cheese cake from a Lakefield business. They also have craft beer on tap, including selections from Brau Brothers of Marshall, Take 16 at Luverne, the Mankato Brewery and Castle Danger at Duluth.

Painted Prairie Vineyard’s tasting room is open from 6 to 10 p.m. Fridays, 4 to 9 p.m. Saturdays and 4 to 6 p.m. Sundays. It anticipates expanding the hours open each day — and possibly adding Thursday hours — this summer.

“We both wanted to ease in a little bit and see how it goes,” Krista said, noting that while she and her husband lead the tastings, they hired three part-time staff in early January to help with special events. They also get a lot of support from family and friends.

Wine tastings are conducted during the hours the tasting room is open, and a tasting session includes four samples from their list of offerings.

Krista is just starting to meet with liquor stores across southwest Minnesota in hopes of adding Painted Prairie wines to their displays.

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Couple transforms hobby farm into full-time employment

Northwest Iowa couple find big success in microgreen business

By Alyssa Sobotka
asobotka@dglobe.com

SPIRIT LAKE, Iowa — If Krissy and Calvin Thiessen would have been asked a few years ago if they believed they’d be making a living exclusively from their rural Spirit Lake acreage one day, the answer would have been “absolutely not.” But a lot has changed for the young couple in a matter of three years. They have a combination of Calvin’s curiosity and nutrient-packed microgreens to thank for the birth of their business, Cherry Lane Farm.

“Once we get people to try (microgreens) and incorporate them into their diet, they want them every week,” said Krissy of the nutrient-dense veggies she and her husband have grown on their acreage northwest of Spirit Lake — right along the Minnesota/Iowa border — since 2016.

Microgreens, Krissy explained, are grown in trays and use soil and sunlight to grow. That’s what differentiates microgreens from sprouts, which she said many people mistakenly believe are synonymous. The microgreens are grown after the same seeds of common vegetables are planted. However, their harvest is greatly expedited, only taking two to three weeks to reach their optimum state.

“We plant every week and harvest every week,” Krissy said about why the microgreen farm has quickly evolved into a full-time job.

The couple grows between 20 and 30 microgreen varieties depending on the time of year. The finicky plants are grown year-round in the couple’s 120 foot by 30 foot greenhouse Krissy and Calvin constructed two years ago as the demand for microgreens continued to grow.

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The most popular varieties the couple grows and sells are pea shoots, sunflower shoots, broccoli, arugula and a combination of 10 varieties they call a power mix.

To assume the miniature versions of their mature counterparts are less flavorful or are less nutritious would be incorrect.

“A good rule of thumb for the microgreens is that they have 40 times the nutrition of its mature plant counterpart,” Krissy said, adding with discretion that she’s not a nutritionist. “For instance, if you’d eat an ounce of the broccoli microgreens, it’s approximately like eating four heads of broccoli.”

The microgreens are very versatile. According to Krissy, there’s no wrong way to eat them.

Despite their size, the microgreens require much work.

“They need a lot of attention,” Krissy said about the finicky produce. “We don’t leave the farm much.”

The microgreens were a new concept to the couple, who started their hobby farm with pigs and chickens.

The new concept eventually evolved when Calvin latched on to his desire to grow a large quantity of food in a relatively small area. In 2016 — at a time when Krissy was three months pregnant with son Cooper — the initial experimentation began from the couple’s basement with artificial light.

“Four days after Cooper was born, we made our first (microgreen) delivery,” Krissy recalls.

As the business continued to grow, Calvin refinished an old porch to resemble a sunroom. After striking a deal to supply select Hy-Vee grocery stores with microgreens, it became evident more growing space was needed and the greenhouse was constructed.

Currently, Cherry Lane Farms delivers spring salad mixes and other microgreen products to Hy-Vee stores in the tri-state area. Delivering to Hy-Vee in Spirit Lake, Des Moines, Spencer and Sioux City, Iowa, several locations in Sioux Falls, S.D., Fairmont and occasionally Worthington has necessitated they hire part-time help.

It doesn’t appear that Cherry Lane Farms is done growing. Krissy said this may be the first year they hire additional full-time help.

The couple also has plans to add another greenhouse in order to grow lettuce close to year-round, as the lettuce salad mix is a much-desired item among its grocery store clients.

While the farm is labor intensive, Krissy also finds some time to take on freelance writing projects and be mom to Cooper and newborn daughter Isla.

Microgreens come in a variety of colors, which also makes them a hot commodity among chefs looking to dress up any meal, from breakfast to dessert.
‘Dire’ times for dairy

Smith, Peterson urge speedy rollout of new dairy insurance program

By Tom Cherveny
Forum News Service

LITCHFIELD — A federal insurance program is being rolled out to help struggling, small dairies. It can’t come soon enough, according to about two dozen ag lenders and representatives of dairy industries who met Friday, April 5, in Litchfield with U.S. Senator Tina Smith and U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson.

The legislators are trying to get the word out about the new Dairy Margin Coverage program and how it works. They are urging the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency to speed up its implementation and make information about it available to dairy producers.

The Dairy Margin Coverage program will allow producers to purchase insurance to protect their annual gross revenue on the marketing of up to 5 million pounds of milk, or about $900,000, per year. It’s targeted for dairies with fewer than 220 cows.

The Farm Service Agency is hoping it will be able to offer the program beginning in June, Joe Martin, head of the FSA in Minnesota, told the group on Friday. However, he said the local offices cannot provide producers with information on the program until the federal office provides it.

“What gets you from here to July?” is the question posed by Mary Neil Priesler, of the Minnesota Farm Lender Mediation program. She was among those who described the financial struggles facing small dairies.

“A very dire situation,” said Keith Olander, of the Minnesota Farm Business Management Program. He told the elected officials that dairy farmers are essentially “paralyzed,” and having a difficult time making decisions due to the financial stress.

Dairy producers have experienced their second worst year of the past 60 years in terms of financial performance, he said.

Dairy producers have struggled financially through four consecutive years, Lucas Sjostrom, CEO of American Milk Producers, told the elected officials.

Minnesota lost 10% of its dairies in 2018, according to information provided at the meeting. Lenders said some of their most financially astute producers are choosing to liquidate while they still have some equity.

The financial stress is taking a human toll. Harlan Helgren, with Frandsen Bank and Trust, of Fairfax, urged the elected officials not to forget the mental health needs of struggling producers.

Steve Zenk, of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Farm Advocates program, said he is receiving calls from producers who are experiencing great stress. He said one producer told him: “I cry every time I go out to the barn.”

The lenders told Smith and Peterson that producers are aware of the Dairy Margin Coverage program. They believe virtually all of their clients will buy the insurance, and that it will help them.

“They do not necessarily expect it to resolve the long-standing issues of over-supply and low milk prices. “We appreciate the program, but it’s definitely not the game changer,” said Curtis Gerrits, of Investors Community Bank.

“What I am trying to do is keep the small guys in business,” said Peterson of the program.

Peterson said one of his main concerns is that producers will not use the program in ways that will benefit them the most. He is recommending that they purchase the full protection for a locked-in period of five years. In that way, they will have the certainty of the gross revenues needed to keep them at a break-even point.

He also pointed out that the insurance will be retroactive to the start of the year. Producers buying insurance in June will know that they will be receiving payments to make up the margins they already lost in the first months of the year.

Peterson, chairman of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, said he will be working to keep the insurance program in place for the long term.

He told the meeting participants that he is concerned about the overall health of the agricultural economy. “We’re one year away from having a discussion like this with crop farmers,” he said.

Sen. Smith told reporters after the session that she came to it well-aware of the dire situation in dairy. “I didn’t hear anything to change my mind on that,” she said.

The senator said that she believes the new Dairy Margin Coverage program will help and she was glad to hear that both bankers and dairy farmers see that as well.
Prior to the trip, Salentiny prepared a PowerPoint presentation that included photographs of her family farm. She showed the presentation to some of soybean buyers she met and discussed some of the concerns farmers in the U.S. have, such as weather impacts to the crop and markets.

“Right now there’s enough challenges,” she said. “A big factor I shared with them was the weather. It affects us during planting, the growing season and harvest. That’s universal.

“Also, family. In the Philippines, they’re very family-oriented. It was important they could see that we, too, value and love our families and we’re all involved in the farming. It’s a family operation, and it’s our livelihood. They could understand it’s our business and our passion.”

Salentiny said while trade issues were discussed, all understood that there are “so many layers” to the issue.

Salentiny said when trade issues were discussed, all understood that there are “so many layers” to the issue.

A few things surprised Salentiny during her travels, starting with the traffic.

On their first day in the Philippines, they had to be on the road at 5:30 a.m. to make a morning appointment. “The traffic is unending — congested,” she said. “We would leave an hour or two to make an appointment, even if you were just going a couple of miles. Everybody allows everyone to move through traffic with just a honk of the horn, and semis are only allowed to run at certain times because it is so congested.”

During their visit to the port, they viewed a long line of trucks waiting just to get back onto the road system when they were allowed.

Salentiny was also overwhelmed by the population — 105 million in the Philippines, and more than half of them are ages 24 and younger.

“I enjoyed how friendly and how they were such a generous people,” she said. Meeting face to face with buyers like those in Malaysia and the Philippines is important, Salentiny said.

Joining her on the trip were Christian Lilienthal, Arlington; Ben Storm, St. Charles; and MSR&PC Chair Patrick O’Leary, Benson. They were selected from a field of 30 applicants.

“Joining her on the trip were Christian Lilienthal, Arlington; Ben Storm, St. Charles; and MSR&PC Chair Patrick O’Leary, Benson. They were selected from a field of 30 applicants.

“I realize if other farmers have the opportunity to go, it would really expand their knowledge and horizon on what’s going on in the world,” she said. “I think it’s really important for understanding.

“If we go over there and build these relationships, then we have the opportunity to know what is needed to meet those goals.”

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— MARGIE SALENTINY, Farmer

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A sign at the aquaculture facility in the Philippines shows the different varieties of fish, which are fed processed soybeans.

A sign at the aquaculture facility in the Philippines shows the different varieties of fish, which are fed processed soybeans.

Minnesota soybean farmers toured soybean processing facilities during their visit to the Philippines and Malaysia last month.
Comparing corn, soybean cash prices with average rental rates

The average cash price for corn and soybeans each calendar year since 2003 is listed here. Columns two and three list the average cash prices each year in Worthington for corn and soybeans. The fourth column lists the average percent change in corn and soybean prices from the prior year. Column five lists the average rent paid by 1,200 farmers in southern Minnesota who are part of Adult Farm Management programs. Column six multiplies the price percent change by previous year’s actual average rents to determine the farmland rent each year. Column seven starts with the average rent of $127 in 2003 and then multiplies this by the corn and soybean price change (17.26%) to determine a rental rate of $148.93 for 2004.

To determine the 2005 rental rate, start with the 2004 rate of $148.93 and multiply this by the price change (-25.28%) to determine an average rental rate of $111.28 for 2005. This process was repeated to determine rentals rate through 2018. The last three columns vary quite significantly. If the change in corn and soybean prices was the main factor determining southern Minnesota farmland rental rates, you would expect actual rental rates to be similar to column six. Comparing these figures, the estimated rents using the price change factor were $171.53 lower than the actual rents listed in column five, which averaged $173.06 over 16 years or an average of $1.53 per acre per year — very close.

Using the second calculation of starting with a base rent in 2000 ($98.31 average, not shown) and adding or subtracting the price change each year to the previous calculation, there is much more variability. Calculated rents in column seven were higher, averaging $173.06 over 16 years or an average of $1.53 per acre per year — a significant difference. This more reactive rate is closer to what was called “the coffee shop rates.” Rent had been on a steady increasing trend of less than $10 per year from 2000 through 2005. It then started increasing more rapidly from 2006 through 2010 and then increased only slightly in 2011 due to lower prices in 2009 and 2010, with $6-plus corn and $12-plus soybean prices. Rents took off in 2012 and 2013 before beginning to decline in 2014 as corn and soybean prices moved lower.

Many factors affect rental rates including property taxes, input costs, yields, prices and gross income, but there does seem to be a relatively close tie to corn and soybean prices and southern Minnesota farmland rental rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Year</th>
<th>Column 1 Cash Corn Price</th>
<th>Column 2 Cash Soybean Price</th>
<th>Column 3 Average Corn Price &amp; Soybean Price Change</th>
<th>Column 4 Southern MN Average Rent</th>
<th>Column 5 Actual Rents multiplied by price change</th>
<th>Column 6 Previous year rent multiplied by % change in grain price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$3.29</td>
<td>$8.56</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$209.93</td>
<td>$212.57</td>
<td>$200.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$3.13</td>
<td>$9.02</td>
<td>-1.55%</td>
<td>$212.57</td>
<td>$223.25</td>
<td>$203.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$3.17</td>
<td>$9.19</td>
<td>-3.74%</td>
<td>$226.56</td>
<td>$223.25</td>
<td>$203.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$3.48</td>
<td>$9.06</td>
<td>-17.83%</td>
<td>$231.92</td>
<td>$198.34</td>
<td>$211.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$3.85</td>
<td>$12.25</td>
<td>-24.35%</td>
<td>$241.36</td>
<td>$184.19</td>
<td>$257.59</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>$6.04</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
<td>-0.38%</td>
<td>$243.47</td>
<td>$199.12</td>
<td>$340.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$6.82</td>
<td>$12.64</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>$199.88</td>
<td>$173.21</td>
<td>$341.79</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>$6.53</td>
<td>$12.62</td>
<td>48.66%</td>
<td>$169.32</td>
<td>$249.12</td>
<td>$334.11</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>$3.84</td>
<td>$10.01</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
<td>$168.25</td>
<td>$170.10</td>
<td>$225.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$3.40</td>
<td>$9.89</td>
<td>-22.78%</td>
<td>$158.86</td>
<td>$113.16</td>
<td>$210.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$4.92</td>
<td>$11.59</td>
<td>47.27%</td>
<td>$146.55</td>
<td>$184.73</td>
<td>$272.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$3.38</td>
<td>$7.78</td>
<td>50.78%</td>
<td>$125.44</td>
<td>$173.14</td>
<td>$185.32</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>$5.15</td>
<td>$5.39</td>
<td>10.45%</td>
<td>$114.83</td>
<td>$121.94</td>
<td>$122.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$1.68</td>
<td>$5.80</td>
<td>-25.28%</td>
<td>$110.40</td>
<td>$79.13</td>
<td>$111.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$2.32</td>
<td>$7.53</td>
<td>17.26%</td>
<td>$105.90</td>
<td>$121.65</td>
<td>$148.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$2.10</td>
<td>$6.07</td>
<td>15.99%</td>
<td>$103.74</td>
<td>$117.81</td>
<td>$127.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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