

Brian Thalacker Hits Service Milestone:
Congratulations on 45 Years of Service



There aren't many who can boast a 45-year career with the same organization. With Brian Thalacker's retirement from ECC, he can add this milestone to his list of accomplishments.

Over Brian's career, he's seen multiple plant expansions and huge increases in production, not to mention an incredible amount of automation, including the transition from manual controls to computers and touch screens.

Brian's parting advice for those beginning their ECC career: The Creamery is the place to work if you're interested in longevity and stability, and you can be proud of working for a company that does so much for the local community and economy.

"I would like to thank the Ellsworth Creamery and the farmers for the employment over the years. Also, the great group of guys I have been able to work with," says Brian. "And, special thanks to my wife for her support and understanding over the years of weekend work and overtime."

We wish Brian all the best as he spends his days enjoying life by hunting, fishing, and time with his family.

Commitment To Our
Craft Award Program

At Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, our team members are more than employees; they are like family. This culture has contributed to the longevity of our staff, whose careers with us often span decades!

As a way to acknowledge the commitment of these team members, we have launched a new recognition program. Staff will receive "Commitment To Our Craft" awards to recognize milestone years in their career with our organization. We look forward to periodically sharing these success stories with you.

Women of the Farm
Event Update

Many of our patron women have been asking about our annual Women of the Farm Luncheon and why they didn't receive an invitation this year.

Don't worry, we have something very exciting planned that will coincide with the opening of our new facility in Menomonie!

Watch for details to come your way in the upcoming weeks. Our focus is first on getting the facility up and running before we invite VIPs in for lunch.

We look forward to getting together with you soon!



Quarterly Newsletter - February 2022

The End of an Era—Or is it the Beginning?

It's the end of an era. As production at our Comstock plant came to an end last month, our team gathered for a "thank you" lunch and to celebrate the facility's long history of exceptional cheesemaking.

As the saying goes, "When one door closes, another opens." And so it is for us. While it's always hard to say goodbye to long-time friends, we know this is the beginning of something great as we embark on our journey to Menomonie!

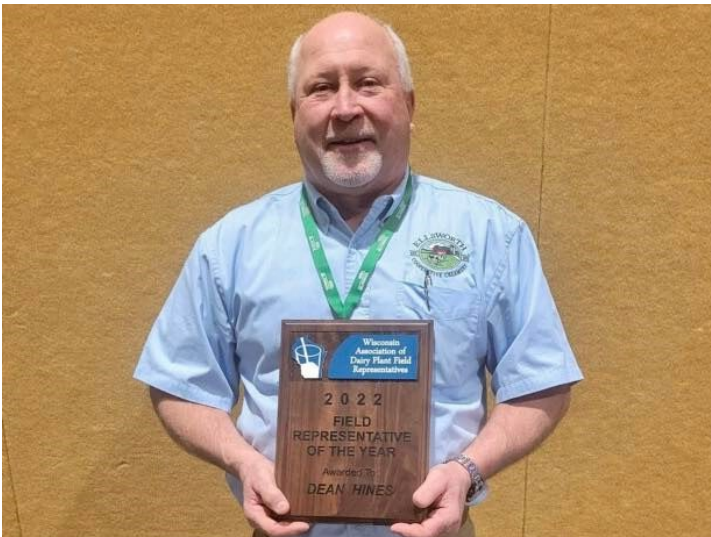
Work is underway in Menomonie to place equipment with the goal of having the plant operational by March 1.



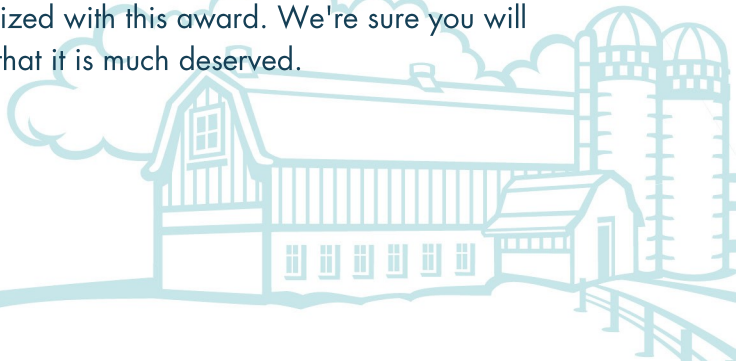
Our celebration included recognizing Mike Bates on his retirement after a 35-year career in Comstock. We thank Mike for his years of dedicated service and wish him well in retirement.

BREAKING NEWS!

Dean Hines Named 2022 Field Representative of the Year



Please join us in congratulating Dean Hines, who was named 2022 Field Representative of the Year at the Wisconsin Association of Dairy Plant Field Representatives annual meeting earlier this month. Dean began his career with Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery in 1975 and it is wonderful to see him recognized with this award. We're sure you will agree that it is much deserved.



ECC Annual Meeting:
Attend In-Person or
Virtually

Join us for Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery’s Annual Meeting on Tuesday, March 29, 2022. To accommodate all, the event will take place virtually and in person. Board member elections will be held and Milk Quality Award winners will be announced.

Watch your email inbox for your invitation, including RSVP instructions for attending virtually and in-person.

Once again, the election process will be conducted using a “dual-envelope”. The ballot itself will not be signed—instead, it will be inserted into a ballot envelope and sealed. This ballot envelope will be inserted into a second outer envelope that needs to be signed, along with your patron number. The ballot and envelopes will be delivered via your hauler.

Please complete and return your ballot and RSVP promptly. Your ballot must be received at the Creamery by Friday, March 25, 2022.

Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery Annual Meeting
Tuesday, March 29, 2022
The Old Ptaceks Event Center
1449 Orrin Rd, Prescott, WI



Lunch: 11:30am
Meeting: 12:30pm
(virtual meeting via Teams)

Good Board Members & Your Milk Check
Paul Bauer, CEO/Manager

Serving on a board of directors is about more than occupying a seat and attending meetings. A good board member will pay dividends to the producers over the long haul.

The main function of a board is to provide policy and oversight to management in alignment with the overall goals of the cooperative. In addition, individual board members and the collective board are organization ambassadors, serving a critical outreach role and becoming a key asset to the cooperative.

Strong board members set the tone. For outsiders, they are a reflection

of the cooperative’s structure, strength, and reliability as an organization. The board member’s influence can favorably impact costs in banking, insurance, government regulations, and the decisions of other trade groups and industry partners. Yes, the actions of good board members can defer costs and make money for the cooperative.

Without good board members who have an understanding of this concept, and a board that adheres to policies and regulations, there will be a negative impact on the farmer’s check in the long run.

What’s Happening in Milk Prices for the Upper Midwest?
Prepare for Negative PPDs

The market is showing us that the Upper Midwest will have severe negative Producer Price Differentials (PPDs) for at least the next six months, to a year, or even longer. The reason for this is that the butterfat value is greater than the value of the cheese that is being produced. Bottom line: That leaves no money to pay federal order minimums as they are calculated today.

Producer Price Differential is how we balance to the market. You can expect every cheese manufacturer will have difficulty paying Class III price, so we will see negative PPD.

Let’s do the math together... If we have a \$1.70 cheese and \$2.40 in

butterfat price and there’s 50% fat in cheese and there’s a premium to the fat of \$1.21 that’s \$2.90 for Federal Order fat. Multiply that by 50% and that’s \$1.45, which only leaves us with \$.25 to manufacture the cheese and pay for protein.

From this example, you can see there isn’t enough value left over. How this gets equated out is a negative PPD.

What this means is that we need to expect negative PPDs and farmers should not expect to receive Class III prices for the next several months. We will be discussing this issue further at the Annual Meeting and I welcome your questions at that time.

Producer Portal is Coming! Are You Ready?

As the dairy industry evolves, it's more important than ever that we evolve, too. Part of that evolution includes the rollout of Producer Portal!

We'll be joining other leading dairy organizations in utilizing today's technology for greater accuracy, efficiency, and smart decision-making.

"Our industry has matured," says Paul Bauer, ECC CEO/Manager. "In this day of smartphones, having accurate data at your fingertips is no longer a 'nice-to-have', it's a 'need-to-have'. Collecting data at the source and in real-time ensures accuracy." Producer Portal will allow you to efficiently gather, process, and visualize important farm data allowing you to see performance and trends.

"Instead of weekly reports that are insufficient, Producer Portal will add value for our patrons with a number of easy-to-use features that boost productivity," adds Bauer.

With Producer Portal you can:

- Transform key herd performance metrics into actionable insights
- Monitor and review data trends over time to pinpoint problems
- View real-time information on pounds, component, and quality
- Access paycheck stubs and payment history
- Export raw data for further review
- Activate alerts to automatically send to any email or mobile device
- Provide remote access to data to key farm personnel or advisors



- Gain immediate access to your data from anywhere, at any time, from any device
- An email address you check regularly*
- A computer, tablet, or smartphone with internet access

99% of our patrons already have all that is needed for the rollout: Operational excellence is what we want for your farm and our cooperative. Producer Portal is yet another tool that will support us in that goal. Watch for future updates regarding the launch of Producer Portal via email and your milk check.

* If we do not have your email address on file, please email us at paige.dewitt@ecccreamery.net today!

Randy Demulling, Age 66



It is with heavy hearts that we share the passing of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery Board Member, Randy Demulling.

Randy was a director on the Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery board. He was a skilled listener with an ability to analyze problems from all sides to find consensus—a valuable attribute to have in a board member.

Randy was dedicated to his profession. The fourth-generation Demulling to operate County Line Dairy Farm, he was especially proud to be a steward of their century farm and see it passed to the next generation.

2022 Scholarship Program

The 2022 Program is underway! Download the application, visit EllsworthCheese.com. Scroll down to the very bottom of the page (white footer), and click on “Members”. The application deadline is March 31, 2022.

