

GA MILK REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 2025



HEADLINES:

- GMP Pledges \$200k for Bulk Milk Dispensers in Schools
- Emergency Livestock Relief Program: GA Dairies Eligible
- Georgia National Fair and Sunbelt Ag Expo Coming Up
- Thank You For Attending 2025 Fall District Meetings
- Meet The Waldroups



*Pictured:
Waldroup Family
Farms Dairy Barn*



The GMP Board of Directors Committed \$200,000 towards assisting The Dairy Alliance in placing bulk milk dispensers in schools across Georgia.

GMP PLEDGES 200K FOR BULK MILK DISPENSERS IN SCHOOLS

The Georgia Milk Producers, Inc., has announced a \$200,000 commitment to support the purchase and placement of bulk milk dispensers in cafeterias across Georgia. Georgia Milk will partner with The Dairy Alliance, a nonprofit organization funded by dairy farm families across the Southeast, to expand their existing dairy optimization grants that serve to improve the school milk experience. This commitment will help Georgia schools install an estimated 30 bulk milk dispensers. "School feeding programs are critical to ensuring our children are building strong bones and healthy immune systems," said Matt Johnson, President of Georgia Milk's board of directors and a dairy farmer from Climax, Georgia. "Our dairy farmers are investing in these programs to cultivate healthier school environments and get students excited about drinking milk. Our hope is that Georgia students will enjoy drinking milk at school and become lifelong milk drinkers because of it."

The Dairy Alliance Youth Wellness staff work closely with school nutrition directors to promote the benefits of milk and dairy foods. Among their education and promotion activities, The Dairy Alliance offers grants to schools interested in purchasing bulk milk dispensers. **(continued on page 3)**

USDA'S EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK RELIEF PROGRAM ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

USDA announced the Emergency Livestock Relief Program to assist livestock producers with increased feed costs from flood and wildfire events in 2023 and 2024. Many Georgia counties are eligible based on rainfall from Hurricane Helene. Producers from eligible counties will not need to provide proof of loss or damage, but must supply FSA with documentation for the number of cows, heifers, and calves on the farm at the time of the event (Hurricane Helene). Producers from counties not listed as eligible (which includes Burke county) can still be eligible if they supply their local office and county organizing committee with proof of loss from that event or information proving they should qualify. GMP is working to determine what information is best suited to help these producers prove eligibility.

TYPE/WEIGHT RANGE	2023 ELRP WILDFIRE PAYMENT RATE (1 MONTH)	2023 ELRP FLOOD PAYMENT RATE (3 MONTHS)	2024 ELRP WILDFIRE PAYMENT RATE (1 MONTH)	2024 ELRP FLOOD PAYMENT RATE2 (3 MONTHS)
Adult Cows and Bulls	\$90.67	\$272.01	\$82.00	\$246.00
Non adult 500 lbs. or more	\$26.15	\$78.45	\$23.65	\$70.95
Non adult less than 500 lbs.	\$17.44	\$52.32	\$15.77	\$47.31

The table shows the program's payment rates for dairy cattle.

The sign-up period will run through October 31, 2025. Producers are encouraged to contact their local USDA service center for more information about how to apply.

GMP members with questions about eligibility can contact their local USDA service center or contact GMP (bryce@gamilk.org) if they need help gathering qualifying information. Please don't hesitate to reach out to GMP with any questions.

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GEORGIA NATIONAL FAIR AND SUNBELT AG EXPO COMING UP SOON

The Georgia National Fair and Sunbelt Ag Expo are right around the corner, and the dairy industry will be well represented. At the fair, taking place from October 2-12, stop by the Georgia Grown building to see the Baby Barn live birthing exhibit featuring dairy cows and calves from a local farm. Then hop over to the livestock barn and visit Audri Crews and The Dairy Alliance, grab a chocolate milk, and cool off at the "chill like a cow" exhibit. Then step over to the Mobile Dairy Classroom exhibit and see Nicole Duvall give a live milking demonstration. And on October 4th, you can see GA Dairy Youth Foundation's "Dress-a-Cow" Contest at 4:00 PM in the Rhodes Arena.

The Sunbelt Ag Expo is October 14-16 at Spence Field in Moultrie. Under the dairy pavilion, there will be a lot going on! Nicole and the Mobile Dairy Classroom will be doing demonstrations each day during Expo. The Dairy Alliance and GMP will be passing out sweet dairy treats, and UGA Dairy Science Faculty will be on hand to visit with producers and curious attendees alike. Every afternoon, be sure to stop by for the milking contest featuring local farmers on Tuesday, high school FFA & 4-H chapters on Wednesday, and Sunbelt Expo exhibitors and sponsors on Thursday.



Pictured: Junior dairy exhibitor and her cow dressed as Nick Saban and the Aflac duck.

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THE 2025 FALL DISTRICT MEETINGS

Thank you to everyone who attended the GMP-TDA Fall District Meetings over the past two weeks! We enjoyed getting to see everyone and give updates on the work Georgia Milk Producers has been working on. If we can ever assist you in any way, don't hesitate to reach out.



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The \$200,000 in funding from Georgia Milk will bolster the existing grant program that eliminates a key concern for school nutrition directors and school administrators: funding. With these funds, schools will be able to secure a bulk milk dispenser and the necessary equipment and accessories to service and maintain the equipment. Will McWhirter, The Dairy Alliance's Youth Wellness Manager for Georgia said the dispensers have several benefits for schools. "The Dairy Alliance's Dairy Optimization grants encourage school systems to try new things to deliver even more nutritious dairy products and milk to students. Bulk milk dispensers are a great option for schools looking to serve colder, fresher milk or reduce waste from single-use cartons."

Roughly three-quarters of children aged two through eighteen do not consume the daily recommended amount of dairy. Real-world trials at participating schools within The Dairy Alliance's service area show a significant increase in fluid milk consumption in schools that transition away from traditional open-top coolers and cartons of milk. One case study in a Virginia public school saw milk consumption increase by as much as 52% due to decreased waste and increased interest from students. In similar trials across the southeast, schools consistently report an average increase in milk consumption of 14 percent. "The USDA Agricultural Research Service found in 2017 that 77 percent of the milk school-aged children consumed came from school cafeterias," The Dairy Alliance's McWhirter said. "By providing our students with a fresher, colder product that is also easy for the nutrition staff to maintain, we can ensure more Georgia children are getting the 13 essential nutrients they need through real dairy milk."

School nutrition directors and administrators interested in installing bulk milk dispensers in their cafeterias can contact The Dairy Alliance for more information on the grant program by emailing wmcwhirter@thedairyalliance.com.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 2-12 - Georgia National Fair and Livestock Shows
The Georgia National Fairgrounds & Agricenter, Perry, GA

October 14-16 - Sunbelt Ag Expo
Spence Field - Moultrie, GA

October 15th - Sunbelt Dairy Showdown
Dairy Pavilion - Moultrie, GA

November 7 - Georgia Agribusiness Council Harvest Celebration
The Classic Center - Athens, GA

December 7-9 - Georgia Farm Bureau Convention
Jekyll Island Conference Center - Jekyll Island, GA

January 19-21 - Georgia Dairy Conference
Marriott Savannah Riverfront Hotel - Savannah, GA

FARMER SPOTLIGHT: THE WALDROUPS

BUILDING THEIR FIRST GENERATION FARM FROM THE GROUND UP

Starting from scratch as young, first generation farmers, Austin and Shelby Waldroup have had no easy path in the business. Their hard work ethic, determination, and grit have made a world of difference for the success of their operation. Shelby and Austin were both members of the FFA and served as Area FFA Officers, where they met and started dating in 2013. Shelby attended Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College for her associate's degree and the University of Georgia for her bachelor's and master's degrees. Austin began college at ABAC but was faced with the opportunity to go back home and rent the dairy he had grown up working on. With this being a lifelong dream of his, he took a step of faith and returned home to farm full-time.

"Austin had just turned 19 years old," said Shelby. "He had to take a loan out for a couple hundred thousand dollars and shift his mindset to work full time now."

With his experience working on the dairy in high school, he gained knowledge and skills that served him well starting out as a young operator in the industry. He knew what he was getting into, and it was a risk he was willing to take to accomplish his dream.

In 2015, Waldroup Family Farms was established. Today, the Waldroups manage a growing farm operation in LaGrange, Georgia which includes a commercial dairy, a cow-calf operation, freezer beef, and hay production.

Shelby is the Agricultural Educator at Troup County High School, where she mentors and teaches students in the same field that brought her and Austin together. She is also an event florist and does floral management on the weekends.

The couple has two children, Grady who is six months old, and TJ who is three and a half years old. Each season of life they have experienced brings its own challenge, but they've learned it's all about perspective.

"It's been a learning experience since having children," said Shelby. "Since Austin has become a dad, there are times he can't always be there. We've had to learn that this is all part of it."

Raising the boys on the farm is such a special experience that they don't take for granted. Their favorite aspect of the operation is being able to bring the boys up in this lifestyle. "Seeing how much the boys, especially TJ, love farm life is so rewarding," said Shelby. "They can understand and appreciate life and nature at an early age."

The Waldroups are heavily involved in the agricultural industry, and are committed to continuing to learn and grow. They are members of several agricultural organizations including Troup County Cattlemen's Association, the Troup County Farm Bureau Board, and Georgia Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Association.

Waldroup Family Farms shows how, with the right mindset and hard work, anything is still possible.

