

GA MILK REVIEW

AUGUST 2025



HEADLINES:

- Fall District Meeting Dates & Locations
- Be Prepared for Hurricane Season: Send in Your Utility Information
- Georgia Dairy Conference Registration is NOW OPEN
- Georgia Achieves "Unaffected" Status in USDA National Milk Testing Program
- Meet The Schaapmans



To preregister for the district meeting of your choice, please contact Bryce at 229-221-3906 or bryce@gamilk.org.

FALL DISTRICT MEETING DATES & LOCATIONS

Dairy producers across Georgia are invited to attend the annual Fall District Meetings for Georgia Milk Producers and The Dairy Alliance this September. The meetings will be held in each district across the state. Our organizations will hold district elections; report on industry issues and promotional efforts; and announce upcoming events. Dinner or lunch will be served at each location depending on the time the meeting is set to begin. For District 1, we will be doing a district tour. If your farm is in District 1, be on the lookout for more details soon.

To preregister for the district meeting of your choice, please contact Bryce at 229-221-3906 or bryce@gamilk.org. We look forward to seeing you soon and value the input you share at our meetings.

District 1: Farm Tour

District 2: Sept. 8th 7pm @ Doodlum's BBQ, Woodbury

District 3: Sept. 15th 7pm @ Farmview Market, Madison

District 4: Sept. 16th 12pm @ UGA Teaching Dairy, Athens

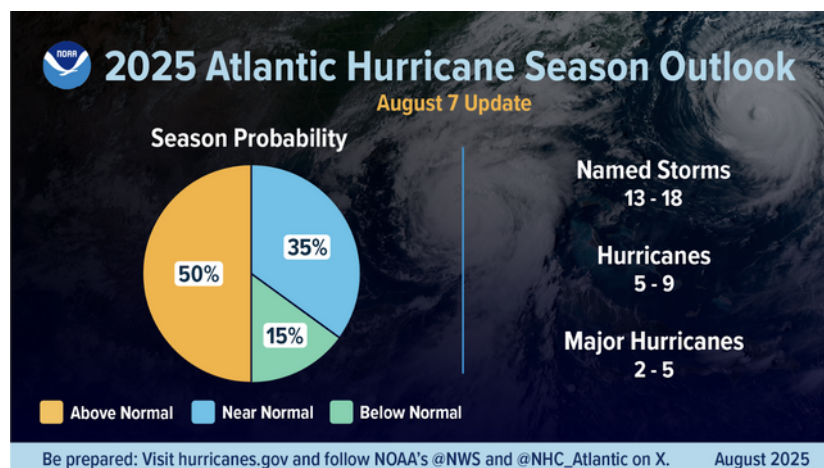
District 5: Sept. 11th 7pm @ Oasis Coffee House, Montezuma

District 6: Sept. 16th 7pm @ Burke Co. Extension Auditorium, Waynesboro

District 7: Sept. 11th 12pm @ Sass! Thomasville

BE PREPARED FOR HURRICANE SEASON: SEND IN YOUR UTILITY INFORMATION

Hurricane season is upon us, and it's important to prepare ahead of time for the possibility of a damaging storm. Forecasters from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have predicted an above-normal season for the Atlantic through the peak season of June-November. NOAA updated their number of expected storms to 13-18, including 2-5 major



hurricanes (winds of 111 miles per hour or greater). For helpful resources on being prepared for a natural disaster, visit our website at www.gamilk.org and click on "Producer Resources." There you'll find information from the USDA, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, and the National Hurricane Center on ways to prepare ahead of time and handle destruction during and after the storm. In GMP's efforts to provide value to our members, we are also putting together a database of farm utility information. In the event of a natural disaster, we will use this information to communicate with the GDA and GEMA to get your farm on the priority restoration list.

To learn more about predictions and news for the 2025 hurricane season, visit www.noaa.gov.

If you haven't done so already, please respond to the email sent out by Bethany from last month regarding your farm's utility information, or call her at 770-324-1260.

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REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE 2026 GEORGIA DAIRY CONFERENCE

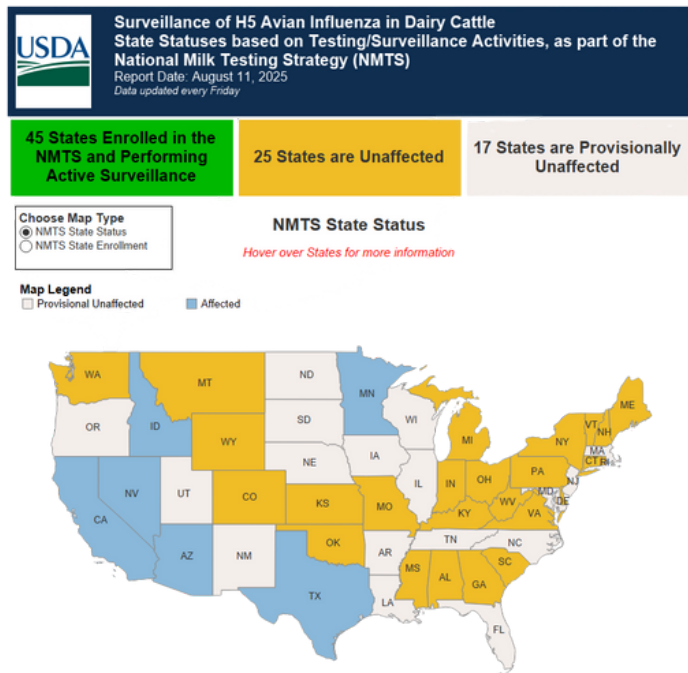
Registration is NOW OPEN for the 2026 Georgia Dairy Conference in Savannah, GA on January 19-21, 2026. Remember, GMP Members receive free registration! As a valued member of the Georgia Milk Producers (GMP), your registration is absolutely free for you, your family, and your employees. This is our way of expressing our gratitude for your unwavering support and dedication to Georgia's dairy industry. Special offer for GMP Members: To further show our appreciation, GMP is offering members a \$100/night hotel voucher for up to two nights at our host hotel, the Marriott Savannah Riverfront. This voucher can be used towards your hotel bill or to eat at the hotel restaurants. You will receive the hotel reservation link via email after you have registered. Register online through our website at www.gadairyconference.com, or call 770-324-1260. Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#) for updates on registration and conference schedules. After registration, be sure to book your hotel room at the host hotel, the Marriott Savannah Riverfront, using the booking registration link from your confirmation email.



GEORGIA ACHIEVES “UNAFFECTED” STATUS IN USDA NATIONAL MILK TESTING PROGRAM

The following is a update from the Georgia Department of Agriculture:

Thanks to the work of GDA's Dairy Division and Animal Health teams in collaboration with Georgia Milk Producers, we have officially achieved “unaffected” status through the national milk testing strategy for H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in dairy cattle.



Commissioner Tyler J. Harper states that, “I am incredibly grateful for the support and collaboration of Georgia’s Milk Producers as we continue our participation in the National Milk Testing Strategy. Achieving “unaffected” status is a critical milestone for our state and our industry, and I am personally grateful for the industry’s close coordination with my staff at GDA.”

State Veterinarian Dr. Janemarie Hennebelle says, “Our participation in the National Milk Testing Strategy depends upon the cooperation and support of milk producers across the state. We could not have achieved this milestone without you. Thank you for your ongoing support as we continue our work to demonstrate Georgia’s freedom from HPAI in dairy cattle.”
 Thank you, Georgia Milk Producers!

Background:

In March 2024, USDA APHIS confirmed the presence of H5N1 avian flu in dairy cattle in Texas, Kansas, and New Mexico. Since then, there have been confirmed cases of H5N1 in dairy cattle in 17 states. USDA responded by issuing a national order restricting the movement of lactating dairy cows to those cows that have tested negative for H5N1. To date, USDA and its National Animal Health Laboratory Network partners have run nearly 295,000 tests

for H5N1 in dairy cattle. The National Milk Testing Strategy was adopted by USDA and participating states in late 2024 to better determine the extent of H5N1 spread across the dairy industry and provide assurance to industry and trade partners that the U.S. is responding effectively to the virus. With Georgia's inclusion in the "unaffected" category, 25 of 45 participating states have demonstrated they are currently H5N1 free.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 16 & 17 - Georgia Ag Labor Relations Forum

UGA Tifton Conference Center, Tifton, GA

October 2 - 12 - Georgia National Fair

Georgia National Fairgrounds & Agricenter, Perry, GA

October 14 - 16 - Sunbelt Ag Expo

Spence Field, Moultrie, GA

Fall District Meetings (see page 1)

FARMER SPOTLIGHT: MEET THE SCHAAPMANS

BUILDING THE AMERICAN DREAM

Arriving in America with nothing but their suitcases and a shared dream, Harry and Ailene Schaapman have built a life – and a business – they are incredibly proud of. Originally from the Netherlands, the couple made the bold decision to move to the United States in November of 1994. Today, they own and operate Schaapman Holsteins in Abbeville, Georgia, where they currently milk 700 cows and are in the midst of expanding their operation. In addition to running their farm, Harry serves on the Georgia Milk Producers Board of Directors, while Ailene serves on the Agricultural Commodity Commission for Milk.

Harry and Ailene married in 1991 and spent their early years together living in the Netherlands. When the housing market there began to boom, they took it as a sign – and an opportunity – to pursue a new life in the United States. Having grown up on a dairy farm, Harry possessed the hands-on skills and knowledge needed to start their own operation. During college, he completed an internship on a dairy in Florida, while Ailene gained agricultural experience through an internship in Canada. Those experiences opened their eyes to the possibilities North America had to offer, and ultimately gave them the confidence to chase their dream.



Initially, the Schaapmans looked for opportunities in Florida, but a newspaper advertisement led them to a dairy farm for rent in Abbeville, Georgia. “We really didn’t care where it was, as long as we had a dairy,” said Ailene. They began renting the dairy in March of 1995 and purchased it in 2000. What started as a small operation with just 120 cows has grown significantly over the years.

Harry and Ailene raised three children on the farm – Ruben, Monica, and Thomas – all of whom play important roles in the family operation. Ruben works as an independent nutritionist, handling the nutrition consulting on the farm. He and his wife, Emily – known as Dairy Girl Fitness on social media – recently welcomed their first child in June. Monica returned to the farm in August 2024, with herd health as her primary responsibility. Thomas splits his time between working in construction and helping on the farm.

All three Schaapman children grew up showing dairy cattle through 4-H and FFA. The family continues to exhibit registered cattle today.

For Harry and Ailene, having all three of their children choose to return home and carry on the family’s work is deeply meaningful. “Raising the family on the farm and having all the kids come back is so special,” said Ailene. “We are very excited about this.”

Of course, their journey hasn’t come without challenges. From moving overseas to building a first-generation dairy from the ground up in a new country, it’s come with its fair share of obstacles. Their story stands as a testament to the power of vision and hard work in turning a dream into a lasting legacy.