



# News Release

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*"Connecting Cows, Cooperatives, Capitol Hill, and Consumers"*

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## **Two Dairy Farmers among Finalists in Nationwide "Faces of Farming & Ranching" Contest** Voting Ends December 15<sup>th</sup> to Select Three National Winners



ARLINGTON, VA – Two dairy farmers are among the nine finalists in a nationwide search for farmers and ranchers who will be part of a campaign in 2013 to help connect consumers with the sources of their food. The contest is being run by the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA), a coalition of which the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) is a member.



Last summer, USFRA began a nationwide search for farmers and ranchers who are proud of what they do, want to share their stories of continuous improvement, and are actively involved today in telling those stories. The goal was to identify three or four producers who could act as spokespeople for modern agriculture with consumers.

Dairy farmers Will Gilmer of Sulligent, AL, and Daphne Holterman of Watertown, WI, are competing as two of the nine finalists. They were among 118 farmers who submitted a video entry application earlier this year to the USFRA contest. The winners will be tapped to share stories and experiences on a national stage to help shift conversations about food production, and set the record straight about the way we feed our nation.

Gilmer and his father own/operate a dairy farm in Alabama's Lamar County. The dairy has been in continuous operation since Will's grandfather established it on his parents' farm in the early 1950s. They currently milk 200 Holstein cows and raise their own replacement heifers, while managing 600 acres of land used for pasture and forage production. Those forages include hay, summer silage crops, and small grains/ryegrass for both silage and strip grazing. Gilmer is an active contributor to social media, with a series of videos on his YouTube channel. He is a member of Dairy Farmers of America.

Holterman and her husband, Lloyd, are fourth-generation farmers in southeast Wisconsin. Along with their two daughters, they operate a dairy farm and raise corn for silage and alfalfa hay on 1,300 acres. In 1981, they started farming with Lloyd's parents, milking 80 cows. Today,

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they own more than 500 acres and have a young partner who manages crops. They milk more than 800 cows, and sell milk as well as Holstein genetics around the world. The Holtermans are members of the Milwaukee Cooperative Milk Producers. Daphne was recognized as the 2009 World Dairy Expo Dairy Woman of the Year.

The other seven finalists in the Faces of Farming and Ranching contest include:

Bo Stone of Rowland, NC; Brenda Kirsch of St. Paul, OR; Eric McClam of Columbia, SC; Chris Chinn of Clarence, MO; Tim Nilsen of Wilton, CA; Katie Pratt of Dixon, IL; and Janice Wolfinger of Morristown, OH. Each of these grows and raises a variety of food products, but all share one common element: they are farmers and ranchers sharing their passion for producing food and continuously improving what they do.

Members of the public are encouraged to visit [www.fooddialogues.com/faces-of-farming-and-ranching](http://www.fooddialogues.com/faces-of-farming-and-ranching) and vote for their favorite “faces.” Videos of each finalist and information about their operations are available on the site. Public voting is open through December 15<sup>th</sup>, and each person can vote once per day. The winners of the “Faces of Farming & Ranching” competition will be announced in January 2013.

In addition to the public vote, a panel of judges from throughout the food and agriculture community has interviewed and evaluated the finalists to help determine the Faces of Farming and Ranching winners. The judging panel included David Kurns of *Successful Farming*, Chef Danny Boome, Lauren Lexton of Authentic Entertainment, and Emily Paster, a food and parenting blogger at West of the Loop.

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The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF’s 30 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit [www.nmpf.org](http://www.nmpf.org) for more information.