

Dairy Together: Example of Grassroots Organizing



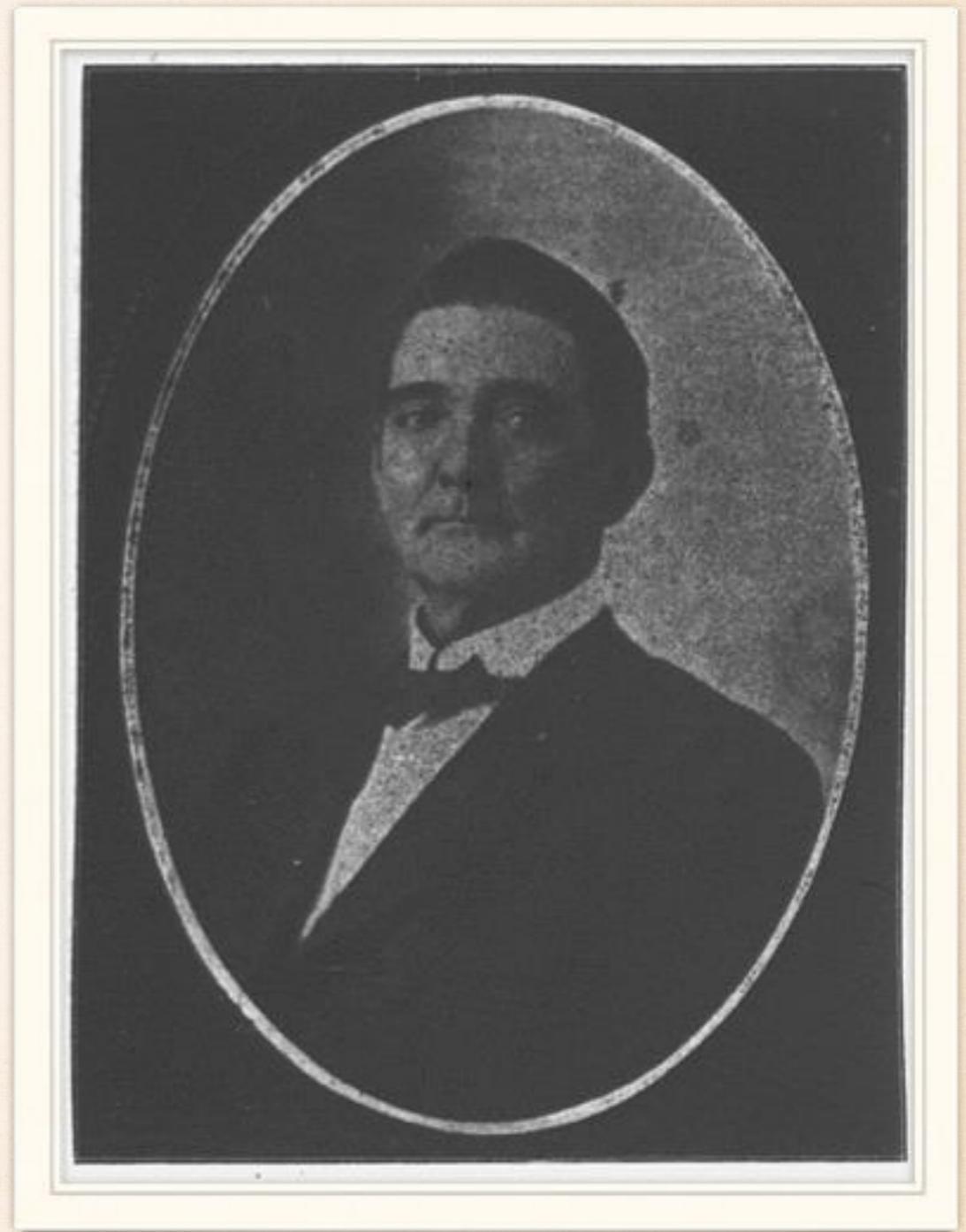
We must go together
and stand by each other
for better or worse.

If we do it, we'll win.
If we don't, we lose.



S.O. DAWES

**Indianapolis Farmers Union
President 1905**



Defining “Grassroots”

Collective action of the people directly impacted by an issue that forms the basis for a political or economic movement



Dairy Survey 2016

- **Major Concerns: Low Prices, Volatility, and Stress**
 - 63% were paid below cost of production
 - 71% said volatility made it hard to invest in needed equipment
 - 52% reported health problems from undue stress
- **Margin Protection Program seen as failed safety net**
 - 73% signed up for MPP; only 12% had received payment
 - 5 people (<1%) said MPP supported the farm during low prices
- **Mounting debt and overproduction treadmill**

Dairy Survey 2016

“We have been forced to borrow money to pay for losses and we wonder how we will be able to repair or upgrade equipment or facilities when good milk prices return. By the time we pay for these losses, milk prices will drop to loss levels again.”

“[unpredictable milk prices] make it difficult to plan ahead for expense and future needs. And because of this farmers keep trying to produce as much milk as possible when prices are low to make ends meet, or when prices are up to get ahead or catch up on the bills before prices go down again.”

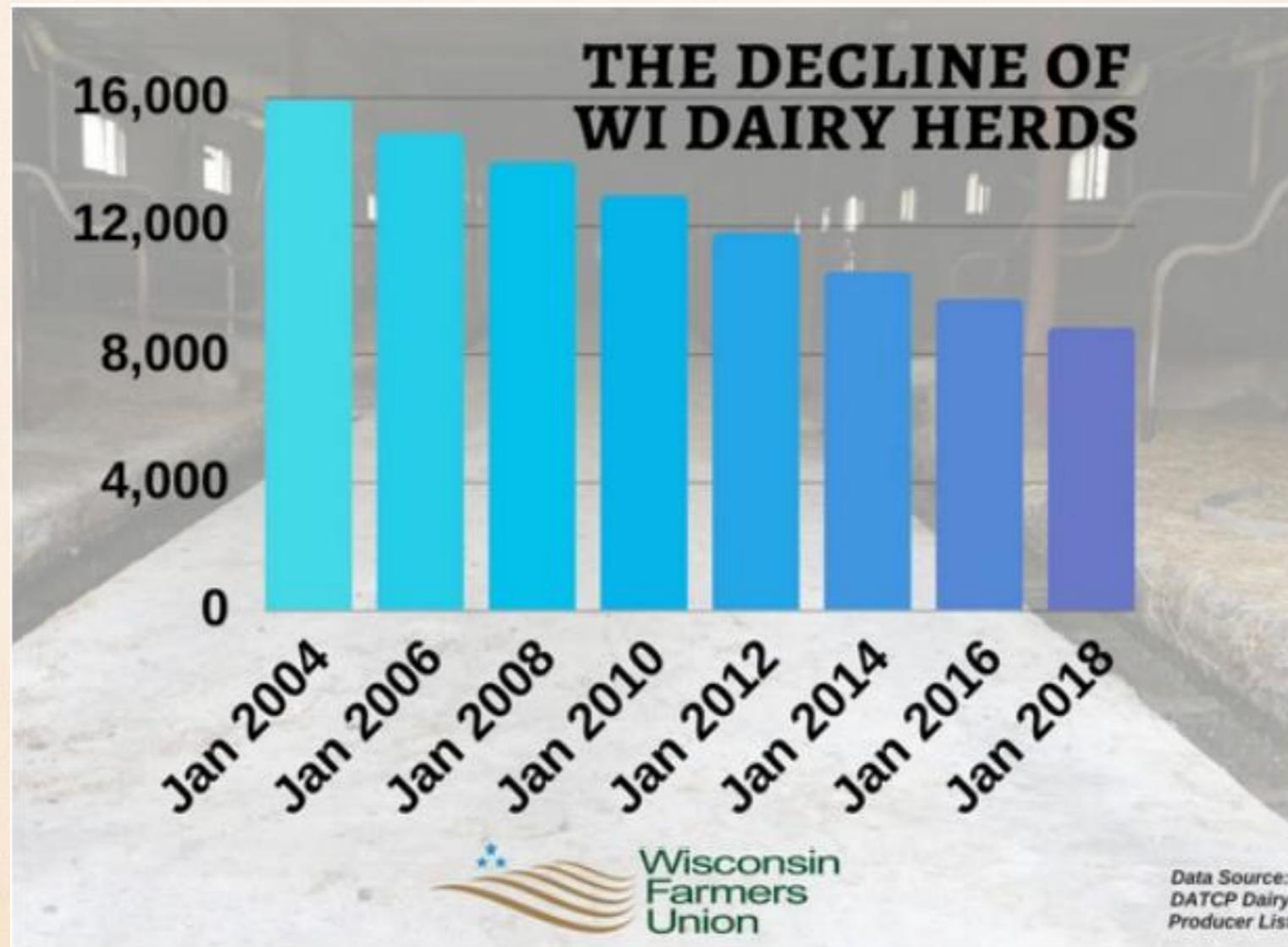
Loss of Wisconsin Dairy Herds

2015: we lost **386** dairy herds

2016: we lost **391** dairy herds

2017: we lost **503** dairy herds

2018: we lost **691** dairy herds



Spring 2018: Canadian Dairy Meetings

Canadian Dairy Supply Management

How does it work? Could it work here?



Come hear about Canada's dairy market management system straight from a Canadian dairy farmer. Join us at this Dairy Together meeting for a positive, educational, and myth-busting conversation about a dairy policy that matches milk supply with consumer demand.



Post-meeting follow-ups

- Phone calls to every attendee
- Building personal relationships
- Farmers saying “I’m on board! How can I help?”
- People looking to us for answers: “What’s the plan?”

Forming “Dairy Together”

- Website (www.dairytogether.com)
- Email list
- Facebook Group
- Postcards, yard signs, hats, t-shirts



Dairy Together Action Group

- Bi-weekly Conference Calls
 - Education
 - Motivation
 - Strategic Actions
- Core group of active participants
- Place to direct new contacts



Grassroots Mobilization: Bus Trip to Albany August 2018

- AgriMark Dairy Summit
- Open call for proposals
- 400+ participants
- 13 supply management proposals



Farmers, are you *tired* of selling your milk below cost of production?

It's time to speak up.
Dairy Together is heading to New York,
and we want you to come along.

On Aug. 13, Agri-mark is convening a gathering of farmers, co-ops, media and officials in Albany, New York to advance long-term federal dairy policy solutions. Farmers Union is arranging transportation to attend.

Contact Bobbi Wilson at 608-234-3741 or bwilson@wisconsinfarmersunion.com for details on how you can join this historic movement to save family dairy farms!

Departure: Aug. 12
Return: Aug. 14

Cost: A few meals & shared hotel room

A stylized map of the United States focusing on the Midwest and Northeast. A white cow icon is positioned over Madison, WI, which is marked with a white star. A black line with circular markers indicates a route starting from Madison, WI, heading east through Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, ending at Albany, NY, which is also marked with a white star. The map uses various colors to represent different states: green for Wisconsin, yellow for Indiana, orange for Ohio, purple for Pennsylvania, and red for New York.

Dairy Together in the Media



News Headlines: Shifting the Dialogue

- Canadian dairy farmer to share perspective
- Dairy farmers stuck on a treadmill
- Got Milk? Maybe too much
- Has the Time Come For Supply Management?
- Canada's supply management can offer a stable pay price
- Farmers back dairy supply management
- Farmers increasingly look to supply management to steady U.S. agriculture
- Wisconsin Farm Bureau Votes To Consider Dairy Supply Management
- Dairymen from across the country unite to solve crisis

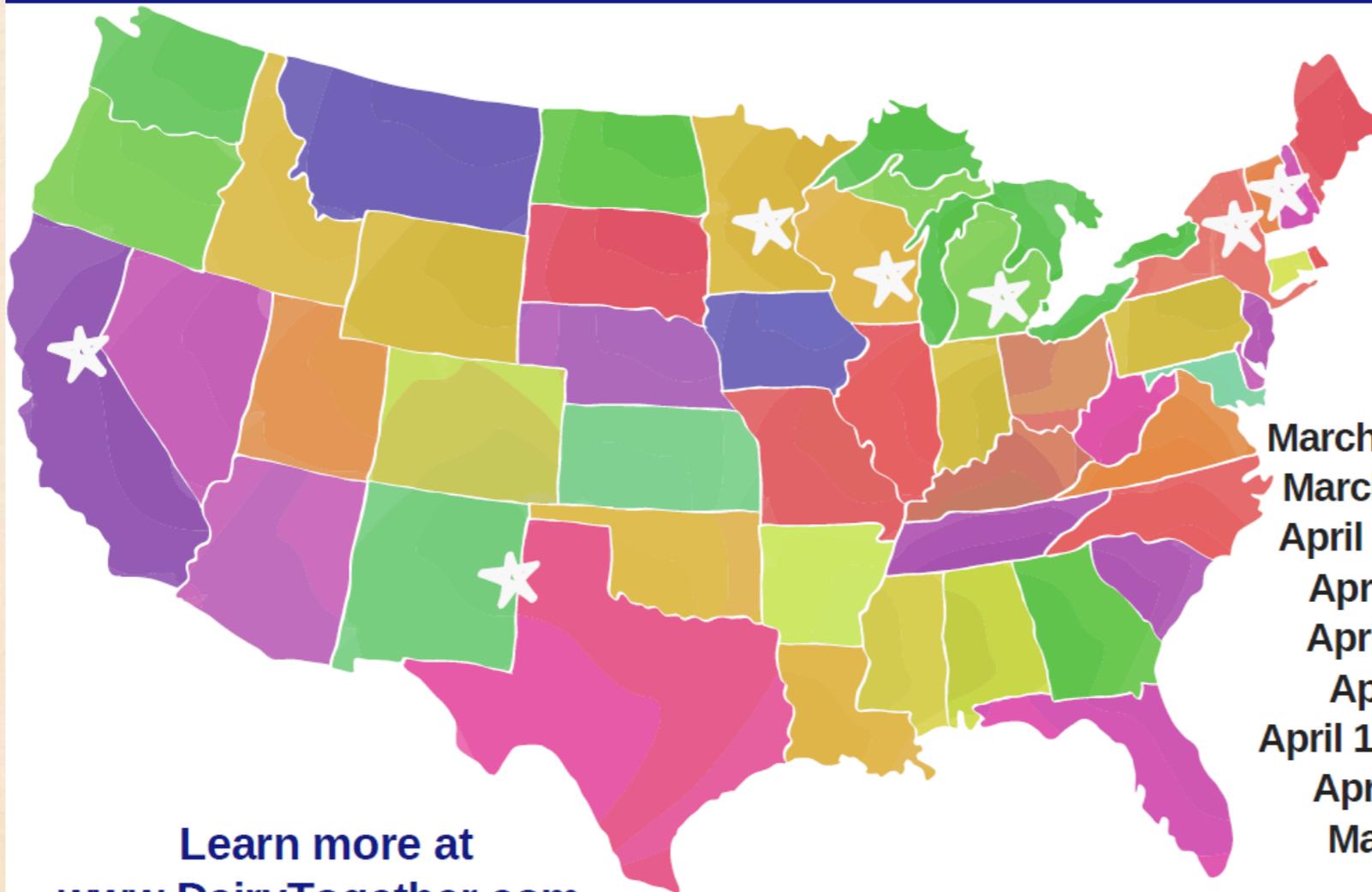
Looking Ahead: Dairy Together Roadshow Spring 2019



The Dairy Together Roadshow



*Dairy Together is hitting the road
... and coming to a state near you*



Farmers, are you *tired* of selling milk below the cost of production? Hear how farmers across the nation are organizing for meaningful dairy reform.

- March 27th:** Oshkosh, Wisconsin
- March 28th:** Cortland, New York
- April 2nd:** Eau Claire, Wisconsin
- April 3rd:** Brattleboro, Vermont
- April 4th:** Platteville, Wisconsin
- April 9th:** St. Johns, Michigan
- April 16th:** Greenwald, Minnesota
- April 29th:** Modesto, California
- May 2nd:** Clovis, New Mexico

Learn more at
www.DairyTogether.com

“Would Supply Management Work?” Answering the Key Questions

A 2019 Analysis of Supply Management plans by dairy economists Mark Stephenson (U. of Wisconsin) and Charles Nicholson (Cornell) showed:

- Increased Net Farm Operating Income for all sizes of farms
- Increased Average Milk Price
- Reduced Milk Price Volatility
- Reduced Rate of Farm Losses
- Reduced Government Expenditures

A 13-minute video summarizing their results can be found at:

<https://dairymarkets.org/PubPod/Podcast/Misc/SupplyManagement/Short.html>

Organizing Tactics

- Meetings: education and inspiration
- Personal phone calls
- Conference calls
- Email updates
- Bus trip
- Media work
- Coalition building
- Constant networking
- Cooperative resolutions

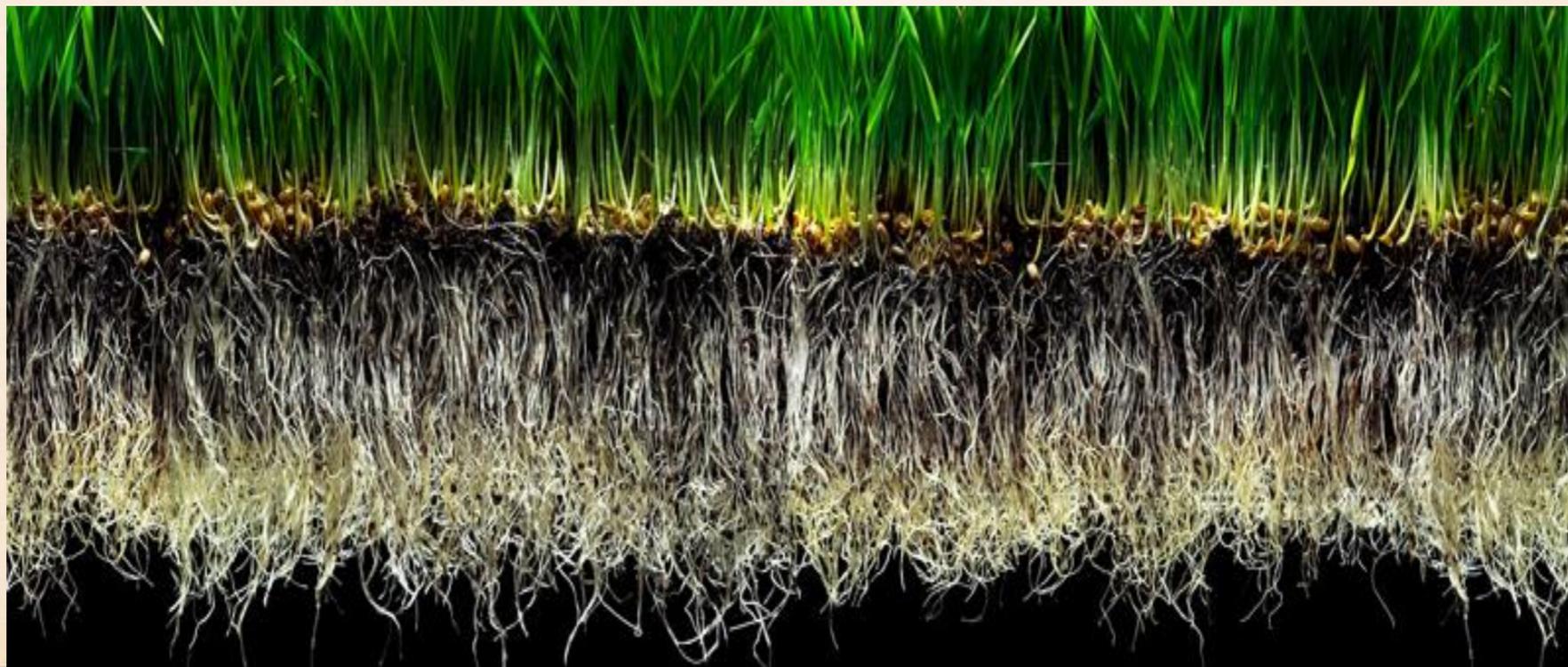


Strategic Messaging: The Brownie Box Metaphor



Lessons in Grassroots Organizing

- Messaging is important!
- Lead with your vision
- Having a plan is good, but having a dream is powerful
- A movement is stronger when it is led by those who are directly impacted by the change you are trying to make



Join the Movement!

- Visit the Dairy Together booth at NFU Convention!
- Dairy Together Roadshow: coming to a city near you!
- Join the conference calls
- Sign-up for email updates

www.dairytogether.com

