

President's Letter
Luke Woelber
February, 2012

As I write this, the state legislative session is coming to an end. This year, I went to Santa Fe to attend both Ag Fest (a reception for all legislators and staff hosted by the agricultural community, with a chance for education and networking) and Ag Feed (a meal provided by those in the agricultural industry for everybody in the State Capitol, from the janitor to the Governor, to remind people where their food comes from). Before Ag Feed began, Governor Susana Martinez came down to the rotunda to sign our Hay Transportation bill. This was a joint effort put forward by those in agriculture to amend the law to allow for the transportation of the large round bales into the state. It was the first bill the Governor signed for the legislative session, besides the Feed Bill (the bill that determines the cost of the Session), and the first time a Governor has opened up the Ag Feed. Beverly introduced me to the Governor as she made her way to the dairy portion of the meal, and we thanked her for her support of agriculture and the dairy industry.

I also had the opportunity to meet several legislators as they came through the line. It always surprises me the people that are representing us at the state level. You certainly can tell which representatives are from areas with a large dairy presence. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the vast majority of the people that are there. As a society, we are moving farther and farther from our agrarian roots, and it is becoming more evident that we forget where and what it takes for food to be put on the table. For me, it becomes frustrating to continually have to explain why we do what we do. I don't like to be accused of destroying the environment because we do not produce milk like they did in the 1920's, or that we mistreat our animals because they are not out on pastures grazing. The burden of education then falls back to us. I ask that if you have the opportunity to educate, please do. Explain that our cows are cared for. Many of us have veterinarians and nutritionists on staff, and that being healthy and comfortable is not a luxury for our cows, but a must. Explain that we are stewards of the environment, without it we would not be able to produce the quality milk that is on their tables. For many of us, including myself, this is a hard thing to do. We would rather not have a visitor or group of visitors come to the dairy to see what it takes to make a glass of milk. However, this eye-opening education goes a long way.

As always, if there is anything that DPNM can do to help you be an educator, please contact one of the board members, myself, or the office, and we will do what we can to help.

