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**Milk Drive Success
Dairy Farmers of America Give Away 4,000 Gallons of Milk**

On Monday, May 11, 2020, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, in partnership with University of Rochester, Dairy Farmers of America (DFA), Monroe County Dairy Princesses, and local dairy farmers and DFA members, Mike and Cassandra Balonek, owners of Mumford Dairy and Meat in Mumford, N.Y., hosted a drive-thru donation event. With the help of a team of volunteers, these organizations distributed 4,000 gallons of donated milk and hundreds of bottles of hand sanitizer (donated by Monroe County) to area residents.

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused widespread closures, keeping people at home. Due to these supply chain disruptions and shifts in consumer-buying habits, demand for dairy products has decreased. At the same time, many families are facing unemployment, which has caused an increase in demand at food banks. Despite the pandemic, dairy cows produce milk every day and in some cases, this created an excess of product in the marketplace. Rather than dumping product, Dairy Farmers of America has donated more than 150,000 gallons of milk to organizations and communities in need throughout the Northeast. Local DFA farmers donated 5,000 gallons of milk to Monroe County for the event on Monday.

"With so many in our community facing economic hardships due to COVID-19, we were looking for a way to help," said Michael Balonek. "We reached out to our local Cornell Cooperative Extension office in Monroe County and decided the best way to serve those in need was by partnering with our local CCE, DFA, and the University of Rochester to get milk to those who needed it most in the urban Rochester communities."

Drivers were queued up on University of Rochester's campus to receive touchless donations. Drivers were asked to pop their trunk or open their windows while the volunteer team loaded multiple half-gallon milk bottles and hand sanitizer into their cars.

"This is awesome," said Andrea Lista, Executive Director of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County. "We haven't been able to really interact, so to be able to do this for the community and work in collaboration with the Dairy Farmers of America and great farmers

like the Baloneks and the University of Rochester, it's just an amazing feeling. To see those cars, we are so glad that we can be a help to people, and this is people helping people. That's what it's all about."

Milk not distributed at the drive on Monday is being kept at the University of Rochester food pantry and distributed to small food pantries across Monroe County.



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