Dear Northeast Ohio Dairy Farmer:

Milk and cheese production have long been major agricultural businesses in northeast Ohio. As you well know, there has been great contraction in the number of dairy farms in the region. Looking ahead, there are many difficult issues facing continued and expanded milk production. These include generational transition, federal milk pricing, input costs, workforce, waste management, and state regulations.

In an effort to understand better how these issues are playing out in northeast Ohio, we are asking you to complete and return the enclosed survey either by mail in the return envelope or by scanning and returning via email to info@geaugagrowth.com. With the results, our organizations will know what actions we can take collectively to help maintain and hopefully increase regional milk production. We are sending the survey to dairy farms in Ashtabula, Geauga, Portage, and Trumbull Counties.

We hope that we can have your cooperation in gathering the information we need. If you have any questions, please contact David Marrison at marrison.2@osu.edu, or 440-576-9008. As many of you know, David is the dairy contact at OSU Extension in our region.

We would appreciate it if you could return the survey no later than Friday, March 8.

Thanks for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Waltermire, President, TeamNEO
Brian Anderson, Growth Partnership of Ashtabula County
Frank Samuel, Geauga Growth Partnership
Brad Ehrhart, Portage Development Board
William Cann, Youngstown-Warren Chamber of Commerce
David Marrison, OSU Extension
Please answer the following questions to help us understand the issues affecting maintaining and increasing milk production in northeast Ohio. You may complete the survey and return it by mail in the enclosed envelope or by scanning and then emailing to info@geaugagrowth.com. Thank you for your assistance.

We would appreciate the following personal information, so that we may contact you with the results of the survey and with any action plans that result. Please note that individual survey results will not be shared with others; only collective results (by region and state) will be published. If you prefer not to provide some or all of the following identifying information, we respect that choice.

We thank you for taking time to complete this survey!

Name ________________________________________________
Farm name ________________________________________________
Number of years in business ________________________________
Address _________________________________________________
Phone ___________________________________________________
Email ____________________________________________________

Please provide answers to all of the following questions. Thank you.

A. Farm Information

1. Total tillable farm acreage: __________

2. Number of lactating dairy cows (including dry cows and first calf heifers): _____

3. Maximum size of your dairy during the past ten years: Number of cows _____ Year _____

4. What is the average amount of milk produced per cow per day: _____

5. Workforce
(indicate number of workers in each category—a worker may appear in more than one category):
   Family total: _____
   Full-time _____ Permanent _____
   Part-time _____ Temporary _____

   Non-family total: _____
   Full-time _____ Permanent _____
   Part-time _____ Temporary _____
   Local _____ Migrant/immigrant _____
6. Do you sell your milk (check one): ____ as an independent    ____ as a cooperative member.

B. **Five-year Outlook**
Looking ahead five years, what are the plans for your dairy operation?

1. If you plan to **discontinue** milking cows, please check the three principal reasons:
   ___ Retirement, with no one to take over
   ___ Retirement, someone else taking over
   ___ Better opportunities for off-farm employment
   ___ Developer will buy land
   ___ Shift to other livestock, cash crops, or other agriculture
   ___ Want more time for family and other interests
   ___ Can’t make it financially
   ___ Other (please specify) __________________________________________

2. If you plan to **continue** milking cows, what are the major objectives you must reach?
   ___ Modernize facilities to meet profit or family goals
   ___ Grow the size of my herd in order to meet profit goals
   ___ Change my style of dairying to meet profit goals (through, e.g. grazing, robotics or free stall parlors)
   ___ Other, please specify_____________________________________

3. Do you intend to expand your dairy operations during the next 5 years?
   ___ Yes, by adding ________ number of cows
   ___ Yes, by adding another location(s), with _________ cows
   ___ No, because ______________________________________________________

4. If you would like to expand your dairy operation, what are the **three** major factors limiting expansion, in **addition** to milk prices and input costs such as feed and fuel: (Please check all that apply.)
   ___ Weather
   ___ Land available to grow crops
   ___ Land available for manure disposal
   ___ Inadequate or unavailable labor
   ___ Local, State and/or Federal Regulations
   ___ Access to financing
   ___ Taxes
   ___ Infrastructure
   ___ Commercial or residential development in my area
   ___ Community reaction, including zoning or permitting obstacles
   ___ Declining community support generally for dairy operations
   ___ Other (please specify) _________________________________
5. Which of the following facility improvements do you plan to invest in over the next five years:
   ___ Cow comfort
   ___ Housing for milk cows
   ___ Housing for calves
   ___ Housing for heifers
   ___ Housing for dry cows
   ___ Feed handling systems, including storage
   ___ Milking systems or facility, e.g. robots
   ___ Manure handling systems, including storage
   ___ Renewable energy or energy conservation
   ___ Other (please specify) _____________________________________

6. Which of the following management improvements do you expect to make over the next five years:
   ___ Feed management
   ___ Genetic improvements
   ___ Calf and heifer health management
   ___ Milking herd health management
   ___ Environmental improvement or conservation practices
   ___ Financial management
   ___ Transition cow management
   ___ Other (please specify) _____________________________________

C. General Issues

1. Please rate the importance of each of the following factors for your dairy operations:
   1 = Very Important   2 = Somewhat Important   3 = Not important

   ___ Dairy equipment and service
   ___ Availability of financing
   ___ Labor
   ___ Veterinarians
   ___ Feed providers
   ___ Outside advisors (nutritional, genetics, financial, Extension, legal/regulatory)
   ___ Land availability
   ___ Local community acceptance/support
   ___ Milk market risks
   ___ Farm equipment and service
   ___ Other (please specify) ________________________________

2. Please give us your comments on the following topics. And thanks again for your help!

   My greatest success in dairy farming:
My greatest concern about the future of dairy farming in northeast Ohio:

My advice to organizations trying to maintain or increase regional milk production:

This survey is being conducted by
TeamNEO, Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County, Geauga Growth Partnership, Portage Development Board, Youngstown-Warren Chamber of Commerce, and OSU Extension.

Thank you for participating in the survey.
Please mail your responses in the enclosed envelope to the Geauga Growth Partnership office or you may scan and email your completed survey to info@geaugagrowth.com.