USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
Room 2530-S, STOP 0225
Washington, DC 20250-0225

January 6, 2026

TO: Dairy Industry Stakeholders

FROM: Dana H. Coale
Deputy Administrator

SUBJECT: Passing of Jason Nierman, Market Administrator

Sadly, on Sunday, January 4, Jason Nierman, Market Administrator for the Appalachian, Florida and Southeast Marketing Orders, passed away tragically in a house fire.

Jason served as the Market Administrator for the Appalachian, Florida and Southeast Marketing Orders for more than four years. Jason began his career as an economist with the Dairy Program in 1998 after graduating from Purdue University and transferred to the Louisville Market Administrator office in 2004. He was a dedicated and highly respected leader in the Federal milk marketing order system and his loss will be felt throughout the dairy industry.

While I cannot begin to fill the void Jason's absence leaves, I am designating Richard J. Holt, Jr. (Rick) as the Acting Market Administrator for the Appalachian, Florida and Southeast Marketing Orders effective immediately and until further notice. Rick has served the dairy industry through the Federal milk marketing order program for over 38 years, most recently as an Assistant Market Administrator for the three orders. During his career, Rick primarily focused on audit programs but also has worked in other operational areas including marketing services, accounting, and market information. John Herbert and Jeff Gooch will continue in their important roles as Assistant Market Administrators.

Please keep Jason's wife, Lindsey, and their three children who Jason adored, as well as the staff in the Appalachian, Florida and Southeast Marketing Orders in your thoughts and prayers as they grieve this devastating loss.

Please contact Rick Holt (holt@malouisville.com) or me with any questions.