

## Should We Be Playing Offense or Defense?

Rob Barley, PMMB Chair

A little over a month ago we watched a Super Bowl that was all about defense, but in the end the offense needed to score to win the game. It feels like the dairy industry has been playing defense for the past several years. Trying to stop the competition from scoring 'our' customers. Every time we stop a drive, they score on the next play because we fail to muster any offense. We get tired and begin to feel like giving up.

I am not saying we stop playing defense, but let's begin to come up with some plays to begin scoring customers. I think we have seen a lot of good things happening. So, let's look at our play book and use the plays that are working and come up with some new ones.

I love the way Nelson Troutman's simple act of putting a message on a round bale has stirred dairy farms and related businesses to follow suit. There is now a Facebook page titled 97milk that has a large following. The main goal is to show people the value of milk. A very strong play in the offense's playbook.

We were able to see great ads from DMI and Milk PEP during the Superbowl. Both showing customers about the great uses of dairy and why milk is what is real. Let me be very candid. I have not always been the 'Checkoff Program's biggest fan; however, I think they are now working together making a difference not only in showing people why they should be consuming dairy, but also helping to develop and market new products. That sounds like a good offense to me.

As I meet with farmers and milk processors, I hear both defensive and offensive strategies. The difference generally comes with the demeanor of the one speaking. Offensive strategies are talked about with excitement, while defensive strategies are spoken with 'I hope this works' attitude.

I encourage everyone in the dairy industry to begin to develop some new plays for the offense. Let's find ways to score with our customers and make the greatest comeback ever seen.