



The U.S. Dairy Industry

A Vital Contributor To Economic Development

America's dairy industry is more than milk. It's jobs and economic activity for the people of our country. The U.S. is home to a mixture of large and small dairy farms — both of which contribute to the local economy by supporting local businesses and the community tax base.

America's dairy industry is an important contributor to our nation's overall economy. Each dollar a dairy producer receives in milk sales generates more money for the local economy.

- More than 60,000 U.S. dairy farms provide milk, cheese and yogurt to the U.S. and other countries. About 99 percent of all dairy farms are family-owned.
- On dairy farms, the average herd size is 115 cows.
 - Seventy-seven percent of dairy farms have fewer than 100 cows. Farms with more than 100 cows produce 78 percent of the milk.
- The average U.S. cow will produce 6.2 gallons per day over the course of a typical year. That's more than 2,275 gallons a year.
- U.S. dairy farms produce almost 177 billion pounds of milk annually.
- There are dairy farms spread across all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Most milk only travels about 100 miles to get from the dairy to your local grocery store.
- California produces the most milk — 21 percent of U.S. production.
- Dairy is the number one agricultural business in California, Wisconsin, New York, Pennsylvania, Idaho, Michigan, New Mexico, Vermont, and Maine. In California alone, dairy is a \$31 billion industry employing 400,000-plus people.
- Dairies create a ripple effect on both the agricultural economy and the economic well-being of rural America. When a dairy farmer spends money locally, it creates a multiplier effect of more than two and a half times the original dollar spent.

Milk doesn't stay on the farm - where milk goes, jobs follow.

- Dairy farmers purchase machinery, trucks, fuel, and more from local companies, which generates jobs and income.
- Our dairies create jobs for people who grow and ship feed for our cows, as well as for veterinarians, insurance agents, accountants, bankers, and others.
- After milk leaves our farms, it travels by truck to a processor, where people make cheese, ice cream, butter, yogurt, and other dairy products.
- Truckers, packaging manufacturers and food marketers complete the cycle by transporting and marketing the dairy products everyone loves. This means jobs in the transportation, distribution and retailer grocer industries.