



# 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.**

- Approximately 65,000 U.S. dairy farms provide milk, cheese and yogurt to the U.S. and other countries. About 95 percent of all dairy farms are family-owned.
- On dairy farms, the average herd size is 121 cows.
  - Seventy-seven percent of dairy farms have fewer than 100 cows. Farms with more than 100 cows produce 80 percent of the milk.
- The average U.S. cow will produce 6 gallons per day over the course of a typical year. That's more than 2,190 gallons a year.
- U.S. dairy farms produce almost 182 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 \$47 billion industry employing 430,000 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.