The U.S. Dairy Industry  
A Vital Contributor to Economic Development

*America’s dairy industry is more than milk. It is 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 43,584 U.S. dairy farms provide milk, cheese and yogurt to the U.S. and other countries. About 97 percent of all dairy farms are family-owned. On dairy farms, the average herd size is 214 cows.
  - In 2012, seventy-four percent of dairy farms have fewer than 100 cows. Farms with more than 100 cows produced 86.3 percent of the milk.
- The average U.S. cow will produce over 7 gallons per day over the course of a typical year. That’s approximately 2,604 gallons a year!
- In 2015, the U.S. produced more than 209 billion pounds of milk.
- California produces the most milk of all the 50 states – 19.6 percent of U.S. production.
- The top 10 states with the highest percentage of the state’s farm income from dairy are: Vermont (68%), New York (55%), Wisconsin (53%), New Mexico (49%), Idaho (37%), New Hampshire, Pennsylvania (33%), Michigan (27%), Utah (22%) and Arizona (24%).
- 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.

**Top 5 Dairy Producing States (2015):**

1. California……………………………………………………40,898 million pounds
2. Wisconsin……………………………………………………29,030 million pounds
3. Idaho………………………………………………………14,114 million pounds
4. New York…………………………………………………14,100 million pounds
5. Pennsylvania………………………………………………10,805 million pounds

Sources: Dairy Management Inc., National Milk Producers Federation, California Milk Advisory Board, Pennsylvania Center for Dairy Excellence, February 2015 Milk Production Report, USDA (as reported by *Progressive Dairyman*)
Economic Impact of Dairy (by state):

Delaware
- State ranking total milk production........................................46th
- Total milk production.........................................................98.5 million pounds
- Number of cows...............................................................5,000 cows
- Milk per cow.................................................................19,700 pounds
- Number of licensed herds..................................................35 herds
- Average herd size............................................................143 cows

Maryland
- State ranking total milk production........................................29th
- Total milk production.........................................................983 million pounds
- Number of cows...............................................................49,000 cows
- Milk per cow.................................................................20,061 pounds
- Number of licensed herds..................................................440 herds
- Average herd size............................................................111 cows

New Jersey
- State ranking total milk production........................................44th
- Total milk production.........................................................127 million pounds
- Number of cows...............................................................7,000 cows
- Milk per cow.................................................................18,143 pounds
- Number of licensed herds..................................................65 herds
- Average herd size............................................................108 cows

New York
- State ranking total milk production........................................4th
- Total milk production.........................................................14,100 million pounds
- Number of cows...............................................................618,000 cows
- Milk per cow.................................................................22,816 pounds
- Number of licensed herds..................................................4,830 herds
- Average herd size............................................................128 cows

Pennsylvania
- State ranking total milk production.......................................5th
- Total milk production.........................................................10,805 million pounds
- Number of cows...............................................................530,000 cows
- Milk per cow.................................................................20,387 pounds
- Number of licensed herds..................................................6,770 herds
- Average herd size............................................................78 cows

Virginia
- State ranking total milk production.......................................24th
- Total milk production.........................................................1,771 million pounds
- Number of cows...............................................................91,000 cows
- Milk per cow.................................................................19,462 pounds
- Number of licensed herds..................................................630 herds
- Average herd size............................................................144 cows
Dairy Websites
For more useful information about dairy farming and dairy products, you may want to visit these websites:

choosemyplate.gov
Access nutrition information from the United States Department of Agriculture.

dairyspot.com
Home of Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association and Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, your local dairy checkoff and promotion organizations. Visit the ‘Resources’ page for downloadable files.

foodsafty.gov
News and resources on a variety of food safety topics.

fueluptoplay60.com
The “hub” for program information about Fuel Up to Play 60, a partnership between the National Dairy Council, USDA and National Football League.

dairyfarmingtoday.org
Learn how modern dairy farm families care for their animals, land and water while growing healthy farming businesses for future generations.

www.dairy.org
Industry information about the national dairy farmer-funded checkoff and its programs.

www.dairygood.org
Information about dairy farming and sustainability.

www.dairyresponse.com
Information and resources regarding dairy animal care issues.

www.usdairy.com
Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy website with collective resources offer consumers nutritious dairy products and ingredients, and promote the health of people, communities, the planet and the industry.

www.ilovecheese.com
Everything you ever wanted to know about cheese.

www.milkmustache.com
The best of the “got milk?®”“milk mustache” campaign.

www.nationaldairycouncil.org
Information and media resource about the health benefits of dairy products.

www.nationaldairyfarm.com
Information on the National Dairy Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) Program.