

DAIRY

Virginia Ag Facts



Milk cows on farms 97,000 head
 Total milk produced 1.73 billion pounds
 Value of milk produced \$371.5 million
 Annual average milk per cow 17,612 pounds
 —National Agricultural Statistics Service (Most recent figures, 2008)

Virginia national dairy cow ranking

21st in number of dairy cows
 —NASS (Most recent figures, 2009)

Top dairy counties (ranked by total number of milk cows)

County	Cattle
Rockingham	23,200
Shenandoah	2,400
Culpeper	2,100
Madison	1,900
Smyth	1,900
Amelia	1,800
Montgomery	1,500
Campbell	1,000
Floyd	1,000
Pulaski	900

—NASS (Most recent figures, 2009)

Milk does a body good

Dietary recommendations call for children to consume 800 milligrams of calcium a day for 4-8 year olds and 1,300 milligrams a day for 9-18 year olds. That translates into three to four servings of milk or other dairy foods every day.

Milk contains nine essential nutrients, making it one of the most nutrient-rich beverages. An 8-ounce serving of milk provides 30 percent of the daily value of calcium.

—National Dairy Council

Did you know?

About 99 percent of all U.S. dairy farms are family-owned and family-operated. The average herd size on a dairy farm is 135 mature cows. The majority of U.S. dairy farms, 77 percent, have fewer than 100 cows.

More than 60,000 U.S. dairy farms provide milk, cheese, yogurt and other dairy products to the United States and other countries.

U.S. dairy farms produce roughly 21 billion gallons of milk annually. A cow produces an average of 6.3 gallons of milk each day, which is more than 2,300 gallons each year.

Most milk travels only about 100 miles from the dairy to the grocery store to ensure farm-fresh quality.

There are six breeds of dairy cows: Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, Guernsey, Holstein, Jersey and Milking Shorthorn.

A cow spends nearly seven hours a day feeding, consuming nearly 100 pounds of feed or grass and up to 50 gallons of water. Cow feed is a combination of hay, grain and silage.

—DairyFarmingToday.org/Dairy Management Inc.

Dairy FAQs

Q: What are the health benefits of dairy foods?

A: Studies show dairy foods, when consumed as part of a healthy diet, improve overall diet quality and may help to reduce the risk of osteoporosis, hypertension, obesity, colon cancer and metabolic syndrome. According to a recent report, three to four daily servings of dairy consumed by all Americans could lead to a reduction in health care costs of \$26 billion in the first year and more than \$200 billion in five years.

Q: How do dairy foods help build stronger bones?

A: Dairy foods provide a mix of nutrients, including calcium, vitamin D, phosphorus and protein, that contribute to maximizing bone density and slowing age-related bone loss. The positive link between calcium in dairy products and bone health has been established for decades through clinical studies. A research review of 138 studies found overwhelming evidence that lifelong calcium intake is one of the most significant factors for determining risk of an osteoporotic fracture.

Q: Can I drink soy or rice beverages instead of milk?

A: Soy and rice beverages contain very little calcium, only about 10 milligrams per serving. Even when soy and rice beverages are fortified to the same level as milk, the body absorbs that calcium only 75 percent as efficiently as it does from milk, according to a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. A study published in *Nutrition Today* found that much of the calcium in calcium-fortified soy and rice beverages settles to the bottom of containers, even after vigorous shaking.

—National Dairy Council



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