

# Vermont's Dairy Farm Families

Driving economic growth, supporting the environment,  
and sustaining a healthy Vermont



## Economic Drivers

- 4,000+** direct jobs<sup>1</sup>  
An additional 12,000+ jobs were indirectly supported by the dairy industry through suppliers and the indirect impact of the industry's expenditures
- \$162** million in wages<sup>1</sup>
- \$127** million in state tax revenues<sup>1</sup>



## Environmental Stewards

Investing in soil health, water quality, and mitigating climate change



- 16 manure digesters**—more per capita than any other state!<sup>2</sup>  
Enough energy to **power more than 4,000 Vermont homes** annually<sup>3</sup>  
Emissions reductions of 65,000 metric tons/CO<sub>2</sub>E/yr<sup>2</sup>
- Since 2015, there's been a **61% increase in cover crops** planted annually<sup>4\*</sup>  
The 26,000 acres of cover crops planted last year retain over **150 tons of vital nutrients** in the soil to grow crops in future years<sup>5,6</sup>  
Carbon is removed from the atmosphere by cover crops<sup>8</sup>  
**Carbon emissions decrease** with no-till planting<sup>8</sup>
- Tractors drive themselves with GPS and computers! The right amount of seeds or manure are applied with precision—based on factors like weather and soil type

## Sustain our State



- \$175,000** contributed by dairy farmers to Vermont schools in the past five years to support school breakfast and lunch programs through Fuel Up to Play 60<sup>7</sup>
- U.S. dairy cows produce the **lowest amount of greenhouse gases per gallon of milk** compared to all other countries in the world (dairy is 2% of total U.S. GHG)<sup>9</sup>
- On average, milk provides up to 19% of protein, 9% of calories and 14% of fat in our diets<sup>10</sup>
- With **9-essential nutrients**, dairy is a nutritional bargain at 25 cents a glass

**DAIRY QUESTIONS?** Get answers at **MustBeTheMilk.com/FAQ**  
or reach out to **info@NewEnglandDairy.com** to connect with a dairy farmer near you

For sources cited here please visit [MustBeTheMilk.com/media/VT-Dairy-Sources.pdf](https://mustbethemilk.com/media/VT-Dairy-Sources.pdf)



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## MYTH

Dairy cows are mistreated

## TRUTH

Dairy farmers' commitment to providing high-quality milk begins with taking great care of their cows.

- Dairy cows have balanced, nutritious diets designed by professional nutritionists with 24/7 access to food and water.
- Dairy cows receive preventive veterinary care and prompt treatment when they're sick.
- Many dairy farms use "free-stall housing," a type of climate-controlled barn, where cows eat, drink and move about as they choose. Barns have with fans, misters, curtains and soft bedding like sand, mattresses or waterbeds.



## MYTH

Milk contains antibiotics

## TRUTH

There are no antibiotics in your milk. All milk – regular and organic – is tested multiple times before it gets to you, and if it tests positive for even the slightest trace of antibiotics, it is safely thrown out and never reaches the store. Farmers work with vets to keep cows healthy. Even with the best prevention program, animals can become sick. Antibiotics are used judiciously, as a last resort, as farmers try alternative treatments first. If a cow requires antibiotics:

- On a conventional farm, the cow is separated from the herd for treatment, and not returned until her milk tests free of antibiotics.
- On an organic farm, the cow permanently leaves the herd.

## MYTH

You can get enough calcium from other food

## TRUTH

Milk is the No. 1 food source of calcium in the American diet. Cheese is the No. 2 source. It's all about absorption.

- Dairy helps your body absorb calcium with vitamin D, potassium and magnesium for building stronger bones.
- Other naturally calcium-rich foods such as spinach, kale and soybeans contain oxalic and phytic acids, which limit your body's ability to absorb calcium.

You'd have to eat 8 cups of cooked spinach to absorb the same amount of calcium as you get from 1 cup of milk.<sup>11</sup>

## MYTH

Non-dairy alternatives are just as healthy as cow's milk

## TRUTH

Farm fresh, real dairy milk is naturally nutrient rich — which non-dairy alternatives find difficult to match — and dairy milk is backed by decades of research. Dairy milk has only three ingredients – cow's milk, vitamin A and vitamin D, which is far fewer than non-dairy, almond, soy, or rice beverages, which often contain as many as 15 ingredients, including stabilizers, syrups, added sugar, salt and thickeners. Non-dairy alternatives are often fortified, their nutritional impact has not been thoroughly studied, and they vary in their nutritional profiles. Almond beverages have about 1 gram of protein per 8 oz. serving compared to 8 grams in an 8 oz. serving of milk.