

FARM FACT SHEET



Use whatever is appropriate from the list below to create a farm fact sheet. It can be distributed on farm tours and also to neighbors and community members.

Your fact sheet does not have to be fancy. It can be an introductory paragraph followed by bulleted items, including information about your operation. A farm fact sheet ensures the public has accurate information about your dairy.

Name:

Contact information: (Include home phone, office phone, e-mail address, and website address. Optional information: cell phone and home address.)

History/family: (Tell the story of your dairy farm — who started it, what year it started, how long it's been in the family, and anything unique or unusual about it. Also provide some personal information about your family — such as how many children and/or grandchildren you have, any history of dairy farming or farming in the family.)

Visual description: (Paint a picture of your dairy — describe the color of the outbuildings, your house, landscaping or gardens, wooden fences, green pastures, streams or ponds.)

Community involvement: (List membership or leadership roles you or your spouse hold in the community, such as positions in ag organizations, school organizations, civic groups, business groups, and local/state organizations.)

Awards: (Mention awards you have earned for yourself or your dairy, including milk quality, milk safety, conservation/stewardship, and breed associations.)

Hobbies: (List a couple of your favorite hobbies, as well as your spouse's, to help your neighbors and community members get to know you.)

Education: (List college degrees and higher education courses, as well as any specific training courses you have completed.)

Dairy information: (Provide basic details about your operation, such as how many cows you milk, the type of milking parlor you use, how often and what times you milk each day, where your milk is sold, what label it is sold under, breed associations you belong to, specific animal care measures you employ on the farm, and example of on-farm technologies you practice.)

Other agricultural production: (Mention other livestock and crops produced on your farm.)

Farm employees: (Consider sharing how many people your dairy employs to show the value of your farm to the local economy.)

Environmental initiatives: (Provide specific details about any environmental initiatives on your farm, such as recycling efforts, conservation measures, and energy efficient technologies.)

Other items of interest: (List any other information you think would help establish a connection between community members and you and your dairy.)

Photo: (Find a recent photo of yourself or your family to include on the fact sheet.)

FARM TOUR EVALUATION



It was a pleasure having you and your group at our dairy farm. We want to make future visits even more enjoyable and informative. We would appreciate your feedback.

Please fill out this form and return it to me, at the address below. If you have any questions, or would like to provide your feedback via phone, please call me at _____.

Sincerely,

Where and when was your farm tour?

Date _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

What did the group most enjoy during the tour?

What could we improve?

What did the group learn about caring for dairy cows, the environment and producing milk?

What additional questions do you have?

Would you recommend this tour to others?

Other comments:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



The most amazing questions come up during farm tours. By knowing the Key Messages, you will be prepared for most of them. As you answer specific questions, also work in your key messages.

Here are examples of questions often asked. Remember to explain jargon.

Q: When do cows have calves?

A: A heifer (girl) calf grows up and when she is about two years old has a calf. Then she produces milk for ten months. Next she is dry (does not produce milk) for two months and rests prior to having another calf. Then the cycle starts again.

Q: How much does a cow eat and drink?

A: The average dairy cow drinks between 25 to 50 gallons of water per day or nearly a bathtub full! A cow will eat about 90 lbs. of feed, hay and silage every day. The average American eats about 4 lbs. of food each day.

Q: What temperature is milk?

A: Milk comes from the cow at 101° F and is then quickly chilled to 38-40° F.

Q: How do I know the milk I drink is safe?

A: Milk and dairy products are among the most highly regulated foods. Milk and dairy foods are subject to around 17 government-required or voluntary industry safety checks from farm to table. Pasteurization is the most important food safety tool in use in the world today. It is further assurance that the milk and dairy foods you purchase and consume are safe.

Q: Are dairy farms inspected?

A: Federal and/or state regulations require, and periodic inspections verify, that milk is produced by healthy cows. Dairy farmers must also provide healthful housing conditions for the cows. All milk handling equipment must be sanitary and there are procedures in place to keep it clean. Several times each year, dairy farms are subject to unannounced inspections by state and/or federal regulators in addition to the routine inspections.

Q: Why are antibiotics necessary? Does it get into the milk?

A: Sometimes cows get sick just like people do. When that happens, we sometimes give them an antibiotic to help make them well again. The milk from that cow does not go into the milk supply until she is well again and the antibiotic is no longer in her body. Milk is tested several times before it is bottled. In the rare event that inspectors find any antibiotic residues in a tanker of milk, the entire load is dumped to make sure the milk you drink is safe.

Q: Isn't it cruel to keep cows locked up in a barn?

A: Actually, the cows like to be in the barn where there is shade in the summer and warmth in the winter. Between milkings they go outside to walk around. Cows produce more milk when they are kept clean and comfortable so it's in the dairy farmer's best interest to keep them that way.

Q: Do you use bST in your cows?

A: (Whether your answer is yes or no,) bST is a management tool that helps some dairy farmers produce more milk but the quality of the milk is not changed. All the world's leading health organizations have concluded that milk from cows treated with bST is safe and nutritious, just like milk from cows that haven't been given bST.

Q: Do dairy farmers help protect the environment?

A: Dairy farmers are committed to being good stewards of their environment. Just as we need to take good care of our animals, we also need to take good care of our natural resources. In addition, dairy farmers abide by strict laws and regulations to protect our earth, water and air. To do that, America's dairy farmers work in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state government regulators to ensure that their farms remain clean and employ environmentally sound production practices. There are serious consequences, like fines, if farms are not in compliance with the laws. Through a combination of regulations and voluntary programs, farming practices are environmentally sound. Farmers are committed to protecting and preserving air, soil and water quality for future generations.

Q: How is the local water supply protected against dairy waste runoff?

A: Quality groundwater is essential to our dairy farm, because if we don't give our cows clean water, they will not produce quality milk. Water quality is very important to producing safe, wholesome milk, and so it is routinely monitored and regulated on all dairy farms. Dairy producers must abide by clean water laws that regulate application of manure on cropland. We are required to have technically sound manure recycling plans based on the physical characteristics of our individual farms. We follow many state and local water quality regulations to avoid the contamination of surface and ground water on and around our dairy.

Q: Why can't you do something about those horrible odors?

A: The smells on a dairy farm are natural and do not pose any harm to the animals, my family (or employees) or to those who visit the farm. Any odor you smell is from the manure, not the cows themselves. We do our best to control the odor through technology and good manure management. At the same time, it's important to remember that this is a working farm.

Be prepared to also answer the following questions:

- How many cows are on the farm?
- What breeds of cows do you have?
- Why are cows just girls?
- Why do cows wear ear tags? Does ear tagging hurt?
- How long does it take to milk a cow?
- Does milking hurt the cow?
- How many cows do you milk each day or milking times?
- What happens to the manure?
- Is the calf hurt when it is taken away from the mother?
- Why are calves taken from the cow and fed from a bottle?
- What are "veal" calves?
- Where do cows go when you're done with them?
- Which cows give chocolate milk?
- Why do you cut the tails?
- Why don't these cows have horns?
- Where are the daddy cows?
- How many family members work on the farm?
- Is this a family farm and how long has it been in the family?
- What is the average weight of a cow?

DAIRY INDUSTRY WEBSITES



A number of informative dairy-related websites provide consumers, dairy farmers and others with a ready resource on a variety of dairy topics. Some of the sites are related to specific products such as cheese, milk or butter, while others provide information about dairy organizations and their services, dietary and nutrition information, recipes, or virtual tours.

Your local promotion organization website may offer additional resources (local industry statistics). Contact them for more information. Their website address can be found on the local promotion organization listing.

nationaldairycouncil.org

National Dairy Council® (NDC) is the nutrition research, education and communications arm of Dairy Management Inc™. On behalf of U.S. dairy farmers, NDC provides science-based nutrition information to, and in collaboration with, a variety of stakeholders committed to fostering a healthier society, including health professionals, educators, school nutrition directors, academia, industry, consumers, and media.

dairygood.org

Dairygood.org helps connect consumers with the dairy farm families who work hard every day caring for their animals and the land. Here you also can find information on to companies dedicated to turning nutritious milk into milk, cheese, yogurt, and dairy ingredients. The website shares how farmers and the dairy industry work together to help secure a bright future by providing healthy products, healthy communities and a healthy planet for future generations.

fueluptoplay60.com

The National Dairy Council® has teamed up with the National Football League (NFL) to help America's students eat right and stay active with Fuel Up to Play 60. Check out the website for contests and school promotions.