Wisconsin Dairy

Wisconsin farmers raise many kinds of animals. These farm animals are called livestock. Farmers provide their livestock with proper food, safe housing, and veterinary care. These farm animals give us food, clothing, and many other products.

Wisconsin is called “America’s Dairyland.” Dairy products are made from milk and milk comes from dairy cows.

The dairy cow came to America with Christopher Columbus, and this animal was brought to Wisconsin by the early pioneers.

By 1930, there were dairy herds in the state, but cows back then only gave one third as much milk as they do today. Also, most of the milk was produced in June when the cows ate the spring grass. That’s why June is called the dairy month.

Today dairy cows are fed well all year round. Farmers feed their cows silage, hay, and grain balanced with protein, vitamins, and minerals. In an average day, a dairy cow will eat 90 pounds of feed, drink a bathtub full of water, and produce 93 glasses of milk.

Milk comes from many different kinds of dairy cows. These different breeds of cows came from different places in Europe and have special characteristics. Use your school library to find out more about one of these breeds of cows.

**Guernsey** (gurn-zee)
Golden Brown with white patches

**Jersey** (jer-zee)
Golden Brown all over

**Ayrshire** (air-shur)
White with red-brown patches

**Brown Swiss**
Tan all over

**Holstein** (hole-steen)
Black and White or Red and White

**Milking Shorthorn**
Red, White, or Roan
Dairy products are an important part of a healthy diet. Milk is very rich in nutrients. The calcium in milk helps keep your bones and teeth strong. The riboflavin is good for your eyes and skin, and the protein helps you grow and have strong muscles.

Dairy farming is very important to Wisconsin. Wisconsin produces more whey, and cheese than any other state. Discover more about Wisconsin cheese by matching them with their descriptions.

- This orange cheese originated in Wisconsin and is named after the town where it was produced.

- This light colored cheese has holes which are made by gases during processing.

- This cheese is stringy and a favorite on pizza.

- This cheese is most widely produced in Wisconsin.
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Milk from Cow to You!

1. **Milk** comes from healthy, well-fed cows that are raised on dairy farms.

2. **Before** milking, a cow's udder is washed. Then she is milked by machine. This happens at least twice each day.

3. **The** fresh milk from the cow is pumped through pipes into a refrigerated tank in the farmer's milk house. There it is cooled and kept fresh and safe.

4. **Each** day a special, refrigerated truck—called a "tanker"—comes to the farm to pick up the cold milk and deliver it to the dairy plant.
5. **At** the dairy plant, the milk is kept cool and tested many times for quality.

6. **Then** the milk is heated, or “pasteurized.” This is another important step to ensure that milk is safe and wholesome.

7. **The** milk is cooled again and put into containers. The packaged milk is stored in a refrigerated room.

8. **Then** the milk is loaded onto refrigerated trucks and delivered to schools, restaurants and supermarkets. Fresh, cold, nutritious milk – from the cow to you!

**Activity:** Trace the story of dairy products from the farm to the store where you buy them. Read the sentences below and put them in order. We did the first one for you.

1. The dairy cow eats a balanced diet.
2. The dairy products are packaged.
3. The cow produces milk.
4. The milk is tested for quality.
5. The dairy products are delivered to supermarkets, schools, and restaurants.
6. The milk goes into a tank at the farm where it is kept cold.
7. The farmer washes the cow’s udder.
8. The milk is picked up at the farm and taken to the dairy plant.