



Views from VanDeWalle

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Dairy Month

June is Dairy Month, so I decided to share fun facts and information about the dairy industry this week. The Dairy Alliance has great resources and educational materials, including videos showcasing how today's dairy farms operate. Dairy farmers know that healthy and happy cows produce more high-quality milk, so their cows' well-being and comfort are their top priority.

Let's explore some fun facts about dairy, starting with the fact that all 50 states have dairy farms, and 97% of dairies are family-operated. Also, it takes 5-7 minutes for a cow to be milked and dairy cows drink about 30-50 gallons of water daily! An average dairy cow weighs about 1,200 pounds and eats about 100 pounds of feed each day. There are 6 breeds of dairy cows: Holstein, Jersey, Guernsey, Brown Swiss, Ayrshire and Milking Shorthorn. Most people picture Holstein cows when they think of dairy and Holstein's spots are like fingerprints – no two cows have the same pattern of black and white spots!

If we look at the nutritional benefits of dairy, first about 73% of calcium available in our food supply is provided by milk and milk products. Milk is packed with essential nutrients including protein, calcium, and vitamin D and chocolate milk's combination of fluids, carbohydrates, and protein helps rehydrate and refuel muscles after a workout. To get the same amount of calcium provided by one 8-ounce glass of milk, you would have to eat 4.5 servings of broccoli, 16 servings of spinach, or 5.8 servings of whole wheat bread.

Next time you enjoy a delicious pizza or satisfying ice cream cone, appreciate the dairy farmers who work 365 days a year to provide you with a safe, nutritious, and wholesome product.

(Sources: American Dairy Association & the Dairy Alliance)