



Canada's Dairy Industry at a Glance



Overview...

- Canadian milk and dairy products are world-renowned for their excellence. Enforcement of strict quality standards on dairy farms and in processing plants adds to this international reputation.
- In 2009, dairy production in Canada generated total net farm receipts of \$5.5 billion and generated sales of \$13.6 billion, representing 15% of the Canadian food and beverage sector. The dairy industry ranks fourth in the Canadian agricultural sector following grains, red meats and horticulture.
- About 81% of Canadian dairy farms are located in Ontario and Quebec, 13.2% in the Western provinces and 5.5% in the Atlantic provinces. There are 452 dairy processing plants (including 272 federally-inspected) contributing to more than 22,730 jobs across Canada.
- The Canadian dairy cattle population totals 1.4 million head. The typical Canadian dairy farm has 72 cows and produces an average of 5,579 hectolitres of milk per year.
- The Canadian dairy sector operates under a supply management system based on planned domestic production, administered pricing and dairy product import controls.

...Genetics

- The Canadian dairy industry is famous for the superior genetic quality of its cattle herd as well as its dairy genetic programs (i.e., Dairy Herd Improvement, Breed Registry and Classification Programs). Canada represented 41% of the global (2008) exports market for live pure-bred breeding and cattle embryos.
- The Holstein breed is the most common dairy breed (92% of the dairy herd); Ayrshire, Canadienne, Guernsey, Jersey, Milking Shorthorn and Brown Swiss breeds are also found on Canadian farms.
- In 2009, Canadian cows enrolled in official milk recording programs produced on average 9,592 kg of milk per lactation (305 days) with an average content of 3.81% fat and 3.22% protein.
- Canada is at the forefront of new and innovative research into dairy genetics. Through genotyping, geneticists are able to determine an animal's DNA profile and are currently estimating genomic evaluations for over 60 different traits. In August 2009, the Canadian Dairy Network (CDN) started publishing genomic evaluations which combined an animal's Direct Genomic Value (DGV) with its traditional genetic evaluation.
- In 2009, Russia was the top market for Canadian live breeding cattle. Canadian dairy bovine semen was exported to 84 different countries with the United States, the Netherlands, Japan and Spain being Canada's largest markets.

...Manufacturing of Dairy Products

- The dairy processing sector is relatively concentrated. Today, 14% of Canadian plants are owned by the three largest processors in the country (Saputo, Agropur and Parmalat), processing approximately 75% of the milk produced in Canada.

- The fluid milk market (table milk and fresh cream) represents 38.5% of milk production or 29.4 million hectolitres, while the market for manufactured dairy products such as butter, cheese, yogurt and ice cream accounts for 61.5% of production or 47 million hectolitres of milk.
- Canadian dairy innovation is built on the industry's expertise in research and development. Canada's scientists are leaders in developing and transferring new dairy technologies. An example of Canadian dairy innovation is the development of a robust line of functional dairy products. Already several products have been developed, such as probiotic yogurts, ultra filtered milk, and dairy products containing Omega-3 fatty acids. Canadians looking for healthy and nutritional products will continue to have access to an ever expanding range of quality Canadian dairy products that will meet their needs.
- Canada's dairy products are as diverse as its land and people. From aged cheddar cheese to specialty cheeses, ice cream and dairy drinks, the selection is vast and varied. For example, in Canada, there are 667 varieties of cheese (goat, ewe, and cow). Many of these cheeses are recognized the world over for their quality and taste. Out of these 667 distinct varieties of Canadian cheese:
 - 477 varieties are produced in Quebec (71.5%)
 - 125 varieties are produced in Ontario (18.7%)
 - 65 varieties are produced in other Canadian provinces (9.8%)
- Production of organic milk is steadily increasing in Canada. It reached 73.4 million litres in 2008/09, which represents less than 1% of total dairy output.

...Quality and Safety

- Strict quality standards applied throughout Canada's production and processing chain contribute to the excellent reputation of Canadian dairy products. A significant number of dairy plants are HACCP and/or ISO certified.
- The on-farm food safety program "Canadian Quality Milk" is a HACCP-based program developed by Dairy Farmers of Canada and certified by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).
- CFIA is responsible for setting standards for dairy products, for inspecting plants under federal jurisdiction, and for regulating packaging and labelling. CFIA also enforces veterinary health programs and ensures the safety of dairy products.
- Thanks to the strict standards in place, several serious cattle diseases have been eradicated from Canadian dairy herds. CFIA ensures the maintenance of national eradication programs and also ensures the mandatory control and monitoring in accordance with international agreements, particularly OIE agreements, protecting Canadian livestock from serious diseases that could restrict trade or pose a risk to human health.
- Also, the CFIA and dairy producers are working together to develop national voluntary farm level biosecurity standards for the dairy industry. Developing and implementing such standards will benefit industry and government by reducing the risks and costs associated with introducing, amplifying and disseminating disease at the farm level.
- Sound welfare practices for housing, management, transportation and other animal husbandry practices are in place with the *Code of Practice of the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle* developed nationally and circulated to all Canadian dairy producers in 2009.
- Federal, provincial and territorial governments, in partnership with industry, have made the development of a full traceability system a priority in Canada. Traceability systems in Canada are based on three basic elements: animal identification, animal movement and premises identification. The National Livestock Identification for Dairy (NLID) system coordinates the identification of all dairy animals in Canada. This means all newborn animals, male and female are tagged using the same system.

- The Canadian dairy industry is currently developing a comprehensive strategy on environmental sustainability related to climate change, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emission (GHG) in dairy under an ever increasing efficient Canadian dairy industry.

...Associations and organizations related to the dairy sector

- Government and industry partners work in close cooperation to coordinate the movement of milk from the farm to the consumer.
- Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), the Dairy Processors Association of Canada (DPAC), the Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC), provincial marketing boards and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) work as partners to ensure a strong and dynamic Canadian dairy industry.
- The CDC supports the industry by implementing national policies for dairy production, by assessing changes in demand for milk and dairy products and production of milk, and by coordinating the pooling of milk revenue and the market-sharing systems.
- Research and development of new dairy products are the result of strategic alliances among producers, processors, universities, and federal and provincial research centres.
- As a world leader in food safety, Canada strives to be an international leader in innovation and environmental protection. High standards in these fields contribute to the quality of Canadian milk and dairy products, and meet the demands of consumers in Canada and abroad.

...Want more information? Visit the Canadian Dairy Information Centre (CDIC) at <http://www.dairyinfo.gc.ca> or contact:

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