



COOPERATOR FACT SHEET



ABOUT THE MEMBER

Name of member

U.S. DAIRY EXPORT COUNCIL

Date of foundation

1995

Web Address

<https://www.ThinkUSAdairy.org/> (customer focused)

<https://www.usdec.org/> (member/industry focused)

Social media handles

LinkedIn:

- Think USA Dairy <https://www.linkedin.com/company/think-usadairy/>
- USA Cheese Guild <https://www.linkedin.com/in/usacheeseguild/>
- U.S. Dairy Export Council <https://www.linkedin.com/company/u.s.-dairy-export-council/>

Instagram: @CheesefromtheUSA @ThinkUSAdairy

Facebook: @CheesefromtheUSA

X (formerly twitter): @USDairyExporter

ABOUT THE SECTOR

Brief description

The U.S. dairy sector is proud of its world leading efficiency (e.g., litre of milk per unit of GHG emissions) and innovation that allows U.S. dairy to produce nutrient-dense, high-quality foods that can be utilized around the world to nourish people, support healthy diets and provide food security. The U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) stands as a prominent advocate and facilitator for the U.S. dairy industry's global presence, aiming to enhance market access, foster international partnerships, support science-based standards and policies, and promote the export of high-quality U.S. dairy products worldwide. With a commitment to sustainability, innovation, and responsible practices, USDEC plays a pivotal role in positioning U.S. dairy as a key contributor to global food systems.

The U.S. dairy sector represents a multifaceted and dynamic industry, comprising nearly 25,000 farms, 99% of which are family owned, housing over 9.5 million cows across nearly 6 million hectares of land. The U.S. dairy community has forged a legacy of dairy stewardship characterized by a continuous pursuit of excellence and sustainability.

Estimated acres farmed (if relevant)

Nearly six (6) million hectares

Number of businesses

Approximately 25,000 licensed dairy herds

People employed [directly/indirectly]

54,415 hired workers (2022)

Annual output

102.5 million MT

Value of sector

TBC

% of global market

21% (2024)

Export value (\$)

8.3 USD (2024)

ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

Vision/mission statement

USDEC's mission is to enhance demand for U.S. dairy products and ingredients by securing access and assisting suppliers to meet market needs that facilitate sales. We accomplish this through research and collaboration with members, government, academia and numerous related organizations whose common goal is to ensure the health and vitality of the U.S. dairy industry.

The dairy producers, cooperatives, processors and traders that USDEC represents are collectively taking steps now to reduce environmental impact while consistently delivering high quality nutrition to people around the world through international food trade. Efforts that demonstrate how agriculture and food trade are climate solutions while putting nutrition at the heart of sustainable food systems are something that USDEC supports.

Key areas of focus

- Environmental Stewardship
- Sustainable Food Systems
- Social Responsibility
- Economic Profitability
- Expanding Rules-based International Food Trade

Accomplishments with historic/trend data

Conducted the first full life cycle assessment (LCA) at a national scale in 2008. Since then, in 2020 U.S. dairy set 2050 Environmental Stewardship Goals and has conducted an updated LCA, which was published in the peer reviewed journal [*Environmental Science & Technology*](#) in 2025.

Based on analysis from the 2020 LCA, between 2007 and 2020, U.S. milk production increased by 27% to help meet growing demand for nutritious, affordable foods. During the same period, the greenhouse gas emissions per unit of milk declined by 13% (GHG intensity), demonstrating that farmers are producing more milk using fewer resources and with a smaller environmental footprint per litre.

The U.S. Dairy industry has also published its 2023–2024 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Report, which assessed industrywide progress toward the 2050 Environmental Stewardship Goals. U.S. dairy continues to advance environmental performance, through science-based innovation and industry-wide collaboration. Between 2020 and 2025, the sector reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) intensity by approximately 2.5%, while increasing milk production by 4.7%, an indicator of improved efficiency. Since 2007, on-farm GHG intensity has declined by 14.7%.

Comparison of standards with rest of world

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture data, there are a total of over 9.5 million dairy cows in the United States. With these cows, which represent only 7% of the world's total, the United States produces 18% of the world's milk supply – a total of

more than 102.5 million metric tons of milk. The U.S. produces 11 MT of milk per cow (~10,680 litres), making the U.S. the most productive dairy industry in the world.

Animal care is essential to efficient production. The FARM Animal Care Program was the first livestock animal care program to be ISO (International Organization for Standardization) certified. It also has PAACO (Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization) certification. With 99% of U.S. milk production participating in the FARM Animal Care Program, and strong commitments to workforce development and food safety, care and accountability remain embedded throughout the U.S. dairy value chain.

Current & future activities

U.S. dairy's 2050 sustainability goal aims for greenhouse gas neutrality by 2050. This includes a specific focus on reducing enteric and manure-based methane emissions. Because there is no one-size-fits-all solution, numerous partnerships, collaborations, committees, forums and industry-wide events encourage the sharing of ideas and information across the value chain. In this way, U.S. dairy is bringing actionable measures to farms, processors, dairy customers and consumers in support of this goal. The U.S. dairy supply chain is working together to spur new technology and incentivize science-based research.