



MEMBER FACT SHEET



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](#)

[USA Cheese Guild](#)

[U.S. Dairy Export Council](#)

Instagram: @CheeseFromTheUSA @ThinkUSAdairy

Facebook: @CheeseFromTheUSA

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ABOUT THE SECTOR

Brief description

The U.S. dairy sector is proud of its world-leading efficiency and innovation that allows U.S. dairy to produce nutrient-dense, high-quality foods that can be used 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 innovation, efficiency 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 about 23,000 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 environmental stewardship.

Estimated acres farmed

Nearly six (6) million hectares (approximately 14.8 million acres)

Number of businesses

Approximately 23,000 licensed dairy herds

People employed [directly/indirectly]

54,415 hired workers (2022)

Annual output

105.2 million metric tonnes (MT) (2025)

Value of sector

USD 49.1 billion farm-gate milk value (2025)

% of global market

20% global dairy trade (2025)

Export value (\$)

USD 9.6 billion (2025)

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.

Key areas of focus

- Economic viability
- Environmental stewardship
- Resilient food systems
- Social responsibility
- 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 (GHG) 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.

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 3.2% of the world's total, the U.S. produces 13% of the world's cow milk production, according to UN FAO data. The U.S. produces 11 MT of milk per cow, approximately 10,680 litres, making the U.S. among the most productive dairy industries in the world.

Animal care is essential to efficient production. The [FARM Animal Care Program](#) was the first livestock animal care program recognized by International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Animal Welfare Management standards, and it holds Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO) certification. The FARM Animal Care Program covers 99% of U.S. milk production, alongside industry commitments to food safety and workforce development.

Current & future activities

U.S. dairy's 2050 sustainability goal aims for GHG 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.