

## **FACTS ABOUT WASHINGTON'S DAIRY INDUSTRY**

- There are approximately 480 dairy farms and 262,000 dairy cows in Washington (2012). The average herd size is 546 cows per farm. Washington was the only state to add new dairy farms (10) in 2012.
- Washington ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in total milk production among the 50 United States (2012). Total milk production exceeded 6,243,000,000 pounds or over 723,201,000 gallons (2012), an increase of 1.1% from 2011 production levels.
- Washington ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in milk production per cow in the 50 United States (2012). The average Washington cow produced 23,794 pounds (or 2,760 gallons) of milk in 2012. The U.S. national average production per cow was 21,697 pounds (or 2,517 gallons) in 2012.
- Dairy foods constitute the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest agricultural commodity produced in Washington, with farm-gate production valued at \$1.28 billion. Processing and indirect economic effects boost the total value of dairy farming to Washington's economy to an estimated \$5.2 billion (2013).
- Dairy farms can be found in 29 of Washington's 39 counties. Whatcom Co. has the largest number, with 123 dairies and over 50,000 cows. Six counties have just one dairy: Clallam, Island, Jefferson, Kittitas, Okanogan and Whitman. The Yakima Valley region of central Washington (Benton, Franklin, Klickitat and Yakima counties) – with 91 dairies and over 110,000 cows – is one of the largest dairy-producing areas in the nation (2012).
- Washington dairy farms with more than 500 cows constitute 17% of all dairies; however, they produce 77% of Washington's total milk. Farms with 200-499 cows constitute 15.9% of all dairies and produce 16% of Washington's milk. Farms with 100-199 cows constitute 12.2% of all dairies and produce 4.8% of Washington's milk. Farms with 50-99 cows constitute 8.5% of all dairies and produce 1.6% of Washington's milk. Farms with 30-49 cows constitute 2.4% of all dairies and produce 0.2% of Washington's milk. Farms with 1-29 cows constitute 44% of all dairies and produce 0.4% of Washington's milk (2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture – *most recent figures available*).
- There are 34 certified organic dairies in Washington with about 11,200 cows (4.3% of the state herd); no additional dairies are transitioning to organic status (2012). Consumer demand for organic milk is relatively high in Washington compared with the rest of the nation: it currently averages 8.0% of all milk sales statewide (2012), an increase of .2% from 2011 totals. However, the actual volume of organic sales was lower (-.2%) versus 2011.
- The first cows came to Washington in 1836. Today, all seven of the major dairy cow breeds – Holsteins, Jerseys, Guernseys, Ayrshires, Brown Swiss, Milking Shorthorns and Dutch Belted – can be found in Washington. Holsteins – with their familiar black-and-white hide markings – are the most common breed, as is the case throughout the U.S.
- Cow's milk is composed of protein, carbohydrate, water-soluble vitamins, minerals and water (in fact, it is 87% water). It is especially rich in calcium, Vitamin D, riboflavin and phosphorus. It is also an important source of protein, Vitamin B-12, potassium, niacin and Vitamin A. USDA's 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends three cups of low-fat or fat-free dairy products daily for people 9 years and older.