

## **FACTS ABOUT THE WASHINGTON DAIRY INDUSTRY**

- There are approximately 460 dairy farms and approximately 244,000 dairy cows in Washington (2008). The average herd size is 530 cows per farm.
- Washington ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in total milk production among the 50 United States (2008). Total milk production exceeded 5,696,000,000 pounds or almost 661,000,000 gallons (2008), an increase of 1.8% over 2007 production levels.
- Washington ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in milk production per cow in the 50 United States (2008). The average Washington cow produced 23,344 pounds (or 2,708 gallons) of milk in 2008. The U.S. national average production per cow was 20,396 pounds (or 2,661 gallons) in 2008.
- Dairy foods constitute the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest agricultural commodity produced in Washington, with a direct economic impact valued at \$566 million. Additional, indirect economic effects boost the total value of dairy farming to Washington's economy to \$1.06 billion (2008).
- Dairy farms can be found in 27 Washington counties. Whatcom Co. has the largest number, with 131 dairies. Clallam, Kittitas, Lincoln and Okanogan counties have the smallest number of dairies – 1 each (2008). Yakima Co. (with 68 dairies) is the 11<sup>th</sup> highest dairy producing county in the U.S., while Whatcom Co. ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> in the nation.
- 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).
- There are 46 certified organic dairies in Washington with over 16,000 cows (c. 6% of the state herd). One additional dairy is transitioning to organic status. Consumer demand for organic milk is relatively high in Washington compared with the rest of the nation. In Seattle, organic milk represents 10.4% of all milk sales (#2 in the U.S.). In Spokane, organic milk represents 5.9% of all milk sales (#7 in the U.S.). Nationwide, organic milk constitutes about 3.7% of all milk sales (2008).
- The first cows came to Washington in 1838. 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 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. The Dietary Guidelines released by USDA in 2005 recommend three servings of dairy products daily.