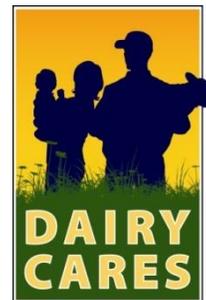


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Dairy Cares Newsletter

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Spread the butter and the word: California dairies showcase their role in a sustainable food system

The beginning of the year is a time for reflection and resolutions, and dairy is in the buzz. Whether it's in social circles or social media, there seems to be a lot of discussion about dairy's role in a sustainable food system. It's a good time to set the record straight about dairy consumption, and to spread the good word that California dairy families are leading the way in sustainable farming practices, especially in combating climate change.

Despite the competition from plant-based drinks and other milk alternatives, overall dairy consumption is at an all-time high. Although Americans are drinking less fluid milk, they've been consuming more cheese, yogurt, ice cream, and butter, among other dairy-based products and ingredients. Over the past 40 years, total [U.S. dairy consumption per-capita](#) has continued to increase.



Celebrate another year of dairy as part of California's world-leading, sustainable food system.

It's not surprising that consumption of dairy products is on the rise—they're delicious and nutritious. Additionally, dairy is an increasingly sustainable source of nutrition, something that more and more consumers are concerned about. In California, dairy farming plays an integral role in the food system and economy. Dairy farms repurpose waste from food production and processing byproducts (including almond hulls and citrus pulp), purchase supplies and services from other local businesses, and provide an estimated 190,000 jobs. The U.S. already ranks among other leading countries with the lowest carbon "hoofprint" per unit of milk, and California dairies are now taking this achievement to the next level by further reducing methane emissions.

California dairy farm families have been fighting climate change for decades, by increasing efficiency (producing more milk with fewer cows), converting diesel use to electricity, utilizing renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and most recently, improving manure management. California is now leading the nation with the greatest amount of methane emission reductions made via the use of [dairy manure digesters](#). With the recent announcement of grant recipients for [alternative manure management](#) (non-digester) projects, more dairy farms across the state will be boosting their efforts to avoid or reduce methane emissions from manure. Additionally, research efforts continue to explore the potential to reduce enteric fermentation (emissions that come directly from animals).



California is a world leader in reducing dairy methane emissions to fight climate change.

In 2018, California dairy families will continue to make great progress in reducing methane emissions.

There will be more grant funding opportunities for digester and non-digester technologies, and for building biomethane pipeline infrastructure—to expand use of renewable bioenergy from dairy digesters. It is important to keep in mind that these efforts require careful planning, continued research, and ongoing funding support.

Reducing methane emissions is just one aspect of environmental stewardship and overall sustainability. California's more than 1,300 dairy farm families continually strive to conserve and protect water resources and improve air quality, all while ensuring the highest level of animal care and welfare. While U.S. dairy consumption has been on the rise, the number of dairy farms in California has been steadily declining. Substantially higher labor costs, energy costs, and regulatory requirements make it increasingly difficult for dairy farmers and processors alike. Like every good New Year's resolution, moderation is the key to success. We must strive to create solutions that are both financially and environmentally sustainable, allowing our dairy families to carry on their tradition of producing nutritious and affordable foods consumers love.

Consumers can have their cheese and eat it too, as California's dairy families continue to achieve unparalleled milestones and secure dairy's role in a sustainable food system.

Dairy Cares is a statewide coalition supporting economic and environmental sustainability and responsible animal care. Our members include Bar 20 Dairy Farms, California Cattlemen's Association, California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Campaign, California Dairy Research Foundation, California Farm Bureau Federation, Dairy Farmers of America-Western Area Council, Dairy Institute of California, F & R Ag Services, GHD, Inc., Hilmar Cheese Co., Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O'Lakes, Merck Animal Health, Milk Producers Council, Ruan Transport Corp., Western United Dairymen, Yosemite Farm Credit and others. For information, visit DairyCares.com or call 916-441-3318. To subscribe to the monthly e-newsletter, contact dairycares@gmail.com.