



Canada's Dairy Industry at a Glance



Overview

Canadian milk and dairy products are as diverse as Canada's land and people and are world-renowned for their excellence. Enforcement of strict quality standards on dairy farms and in processing plants enhances this international reputation, along with strong commitment to sound animal welfare practices and environmental sustainability.

The Canadian dairy sector operates under a supply management system based on planned domestic production, administered pricing and dairy product import controls. The dairy industry ranks third (based on farm cash receipts) in the Canadian agriculture sector following grains and oil seeds and red meats.

The table below highlights some key features of the Canadian dairy industry:

Farm	2012
Total net farm receipts	\$5.9 billion
Dairy manufacturing shipments	\$14 billion
Dairy cattle population	1.4 million head
Number of dairy farms	12,529
Milk production	79.5 million hl
Organic milk production	94 million litres
Goat milk production	46.7 million litres (estimated)
Processing sector	
Largest processors	Saputo, Agropur and Parmalat
Number of plants	480 dairy plants
Milk utilization	
Fluid milk	28.9 million hl
Industrial milk	50.6 million hl

Production of main products	Specialty cheese (247,785 kg) Cheddar (134,567 kg) Mozzarella (110,743 kg) Yogurt (312,633 kg) Hard ice cream (189,467 kg) Butter (97,993 kg) Skim milk powder (84,588 kg)
Per capita consumption	Fluid milk (77.28 litre) Cheese (12.09 kg) Cream (9.65 litre) Yogurt (8.29 litres) Ice cream (5.61 litres) Butter (2.83 kg)
Dairy workforce	Manufacturing sector (24,487 jobs) Dairy farm operations (22,055 jobs)
Trade	
Dairy products	
Imports	\$677.3 million
Main products imported	Cheese, milk protein Isolates and casein
Major suppliers	US, New Zealand, France
Exports	\$237.5 million
Main products exported	Cheese, ice cream and whey products
Major markets	US, Saudi Arabia, Mexico
Dairy genetics	
Net exports (Bovine embryos, semen and live dairy cattle)	\$110.3 million
Major markets for Canadian animal genetics	US, Russia and Kazakhstan (Dairy cattle) US, Netherlands and Brazil (Semen) Australia, Germany and Japan (Embryos)

Genetics

The Canadian dairy industry is famous for the superior genetic quality of its herd as well as its strong dairy cattle improvement and genetic evaluation programs. Over 76% of Canadian dairy herds are enrolled in milk recording programs. Cows recorded in official milk recording programs produced on average 9,780 kg of milk per lactation (305 days) with an average content of 3.85% fat and 3.22% protein.

The Holstein breed is the most common dairy breed (94% of the dairy herd); Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, Canadienne, Guernsey, Jersey and Milking Shorthorn breeds are also found on Canadian farms.

Canada is at the forefront of new and innovative research into dairy genetics. Animal DNA profiles are determined by estimating genomic evaluations for over 60 different traits. To date, evaluations are calculated using imputed genotypes (6K and 50K panels).

Manufacturing of Dairy Products

Canadians looking for healthy and nutritional products continue to have access to an ever expanding range of quality and innovative Canadian dairy products. New dairy products have been developed such as Greek-style yogurt, pre- and pro-biotics, lactose-free and calcium or omega-3 fortified products. Milk protein products continue to be used as ingredients in a growing array of food items, such as infant formula, sports and nutritional beverages and confectionaries.

The Canadian cheese industry has entered into a maturity phase, evidenced by its know-how developed through extensive cheese making traditions and the diversity of its more than 1000 varieties of cheese (cow, goat, ewe and water buffalo). Many of these are recognized around the world for their quality and taste.

Safety and Quality

Government and industry partners work in close cooperation to coordinate the movement of milk from the farm to the consumer. Dairy Farmers of Canada, the Dairy Processors Association of Canada, the Canadian Dairy Commission, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, provincial marketing boards, dairy processing companies, cooperatives and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada all work as partners to ensure a strong and dynamic industry.

Strict quality standards applied throughout Canada's production and processing chain contribute to the excellent reputation of Canadian dairy products. The main quality assurance mechanisms that ensure milk and dairy products are safe and high in quality are:

- A significant number of dairy plants are Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) and/or ISO certified.
- The on-farm food safety program "Canadian Quality Milk" is a HACCP-based and certified by CFIA.
- Sound welfare practices in the *Code of Practice of the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle*.
- National biosecurity standards, protocols and strategies designed to protect animal resources.
- National eradication programs for serious cattle diseases (several of which have been eradicated from the dairy herd).
- Mandatory control and monitoring in accordance with international agreements, particularly World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) agreements, protecting Canadian livestock from serious diseases.
- Development of a full traceability system is a priority in Canada which includes three basic elements: animal identification, premises identification and animal movement.

Research and development of new dairy products and production methods are the result of strategic alliances among producers, processors, universities, and federal and provincial research centers.

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