

# Farm Fresh: Arizona Dairy Products, Local and Available

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*A modern milking carousel for milking dairy cows.*

TOPICS:

**Arizona Dairy**   **Arizona food**

Arizona's dairy industry blossomed in the state with the introduction of irrigation and alfalfa in the early 1900s. In fact, by 1957 Arizona dairy was a \$25 million business, with 372 dairy farms and an average herd size of 88 cows. The Arizona dairy story is big and full of amazing facts!

As a result, Arizona's dairy industry became one of the largest and most financially stable industries in the state, ranking at the top with the beef industry (often rotating between first or second) and always holding that top Arizona agriculture spot in the commodity rankings. Today, it still holds top standing among the many agriculture commodities this desert state produces.

In 1960 the United Dairymen of Arizona was formed, a cooperative that provides a stable market for dairy producers and an adequate supply of milk and dairy products for consumers.

While the number of dairies in Arizona has dropped to approximately 70 statewide since 1960, the average herd size is around 2,000. Over 98% family-owned and operated, Arizona dairies provide over 80% of the milk you see in our local grocery stores. Today, Arizona's herd size is among some of the largest in the country (the average size herd in the U.S. is 187 cows). Arizona's dairy industry creates more than 44,000 jobs (15,000+ direct jobs and 29,000 indirect jobs).

It's in this economic and production backdrop that we highlight the industry's efforts related to nutrition, sustainability, and local and international products. Oh, and let's not forget the holidays and what seasonal products our local dairies are providing.

### ***Nutrition:***

At Arizona Milk Producers and Dairy Council of Arizona, we spend a lot of our time with consumers, and individuals that work with consumers, educating them on the nutritional benefits of dairy. So, here are some of the key insights:

- One serving of milk contains 13 essential nutrients for our bodies to help us stay healthy, and children to grow strong.
- Calcium and vitamin D contribute to building and maintaining strong bones and teeth (to prevent fractures and osteoporosis).
- Protein in milk helps build and repair tissue and is a great muscle recovery beverage because of the high-quality protein it contains.
- Protein, vitamin D, zinc, selenium and vitamin A all support maintaining a healthy immune system.
- Potassium found in milk helps maintain healthy blood pressure and supports heart health.
- Of course, the 3 servings we need of dairy every day are also important in building healthy babies during pregnancy.
- A variety of milk supports everyone's needs, and fortunately, they all contain the same great nutrient package. Whether chocolate milk, lactose-free milk, whole milk, or fat-free milk, they all have the same 13 essential nutrients.
- Many people don't understand that some of the milk alternatives on the market have little to no protein and very few nutrients. That is why many are so low in calories.
- Our website: [www.Arizonamilk.org](http://www.Arizonamilk.org) provides several nutrition resources and downloadable materials as well as information on sustainability and recipes to help add more dairy to your diet.

### ***Local and International Products:***

The array of local and international milk products is truly exciting news.

- To determine if the milk you purchase in the grocery store is local, look on the container for a code that begins with 04, before another two to five numbers. If the code starts with "04" you know it's local.
- Arizona milk makes the cheese slices McDonald's uses throughout the country (through Schreiber foods).
- Local cheese and cheese curds are made under the "Arizona Farms Cheese" brand sold at the Milk and More store as well as several retail locations.
- Arizona milk sold as fluid milk is processed and sold as the private label brand at Frys/Kroger, Bashas, Food City, AJ's and Safeway/Albertsons. Fairlife is from Arizona milk and also processed locally.
- Danzeisen Dairy also uses Arizona milk as does Shamrock Farms.
- Arizona milk also goes into making Ehrmann yogurt.
- Daisy sour cream and cottage cheese are local Arizona milk.
- Franklin Foods Cream cheese is local Arizona milk.
- Safeway Select Ice Cream is from local Arizona milk.
- Arizona dairy is also exported in the form of powders, all over the world.

### ***Sustainability:***

Between 2007 and 2017 dairy made a commitment to substantially lower its carbon footprint and have done so by almost 20%. In fact, dairy only contributes 2% to greenhouse gas emissions, but we are working hard to get to net zero.

- Dairy farmers are big recyclers, and cows' diet includes much of the waste we humans can't eat including almond hulls, citrus pulp, fruit, and vegetable scraps.
- Dairy farmers also recycle their water, sometimes as much as five or six times, and use the last remains of it to water their crops.
- Dairy farmers also take good care of their animals. Happy cows produce more milk, and Arizona cows produce more milk per cow than most of the other states in the nation.
- If a cow is sick and needs medicine, like antibiotics, they are separated from the milking herd and given what they need to make a full recovery. Their milk does not enter the food supply. They must be completely clear of all antibiotics before they can return to the herd.
- Calves are cared for in calf barns so the dairy farmer can keep them safe and make sure they are healthy and growing strong.
- Cows are fed extremely precise diets to keep them healthy and producing milk, and even have their own nutritionist.
- To keep cows cool in the summer and therefore happy and productive, Arizona dairies are specially designed with barns called Saudi Barns. These barns are equipped with fans and misters. The cooling systems work so well they can drop the temperature as much as 30 degrees in the shade.

### ***Holiday Products and recipes:***

Of course, this time of year eggnog is high on everyone's grocery list, and there are a number of great eggnogs on the shelves.

But this year, when you go looking for eggnog, you will also see some Irish Whiskey, Pumpkin Spice and Pecan Pie eggnogs out there at your local grocer, as well as a variety of holiday whipped creams, like vanilla bourbon, pumpkin spice, vanilla, and chocolate.

On our website, we also have some holiday "adult beverage" recipes on our recipe page as well as some great smoothie ideas. Other recipes include overnight oats and baked ziti that help add more dairy to your diet. I love the red velvet shortbread cookie recipe for the holidays, and the kids will love the snowman sugar cookies!

Of course, you can learn even more about our dairy families, the great products they produce and download nutrition information and recipes at our website, [arizonamilk.org](http://arizonamilk.org),

A lot of these holiday products and dairy products were discussed recently during the "Farm Fresh" hour on Rosie on the House. If you missed the show, the entire radio segment is below.



Rosie on the House

12/4/21 - OUTDOOR LIVING HOUR! Farm Fresh Dairy With Arizona Farm...

***Editor's Note:*** Arizona Milk Producers and Dairy Council of Arizona funded by a checkoff program, promote dairy and nutrition education in AZ- we do this by helping consumers get to know our dairy farmers and dairy families through media interviews and dairy farm visits and virtual visits. Today, very few people have direct associations with farming. We also work with schools on adopting a cow program to teach kids about all the hard work that goes into taking care of cows that produce milk. Additionally, we have a nutrition education department as well where we provide consumers, schools, and health professionals with nutrition information about dairy, as well as information on sustainability