

Vermont Dairy Farms, Then & Now: Innovation, Conservation & Dedication



Dairy Farmers Enrich Vermont's Economy, Environment, and Communities

As part of a stewardship pledge to consumers, the dairy industry is pursuing a voluntary goal to **cut GHG emissions for milk by 25%** from 2007–2008 levels.¹



Eighty percent (80%) of dairy cows' diets comes from plant fibers and feedstuffs that they can digest but humans can't and would otherwise go to landfills.²



The U.S. dairy industry has **decreased its water use by 65+%** over the past decades.³



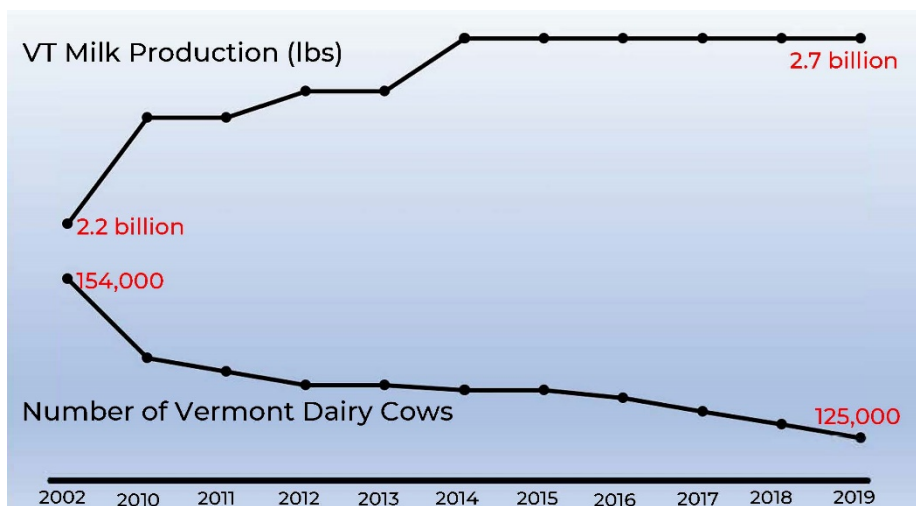
Most dairy farm manure is incorporated into fields as natural fertilizer, **increasing soil's water-holding capabilities by 20%**.⁴



Dairy farmers **contributed \$175,000 to Vermont schools** in the past five years to support school breakfast and lunch programs through Fuel Up to Play 60.⁵

Dairy totaled **\$3.8 billion in economic impact** in Vermont in 2018.⁶

Dairy created **17,157 Vermont jobs** in 2018.⁶



With agricultural and technological advances, dairy farmers have become more sustainable, with advances in cow care, nutrition, genetics and technology. Even with fewer cows, dairy farmers can produce more milk. From 2002 to 2019, the amount of milk produced by Vermont farmers increased by 500 million pounds.⁷

New England Dairy is a non-profit education organization staffed by registered dietitians and other professionals that champion New England dairy farmers and the nutritious foods they produce.

Contact Us:

289 Hurricane Lane Suite 201, Williston, VT 05496
info@newenglanddairy.com, 802-876-7266

Vermont Farm Feature: Doton Farm | Barnard, VT

Paul Doton is a third-generation dairy farmer from Barnard, Vermont. Paul owns and operates his 100-cow farm alongside his wife Sherry and son Bryan. Doton Farm is a member-owner of the award-winning Cabot Creamery Cooperative. Doton Farm has played an instrumental role in increasing planet-progressive agricultural practices in eastern Vermont within the Connecticut River Watershed. In 2016 Paul spearheaded the founding of the Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance. The group is made up of farms and agricultural businesses focused on implementing farming practices that protect and improve local water, soil and air.



Photo Credit: Agri-Mark, Inc.

Conservation Practices on the Rise in CT River Watershed

Written by Paul Doton - Chair, Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance

Snow is on the ground and most farmers and producers across the region have set aside field work until the spring. In the Connecticut River Watershed, the winter months are a chance for farmers to look back on our conservation work over the past year. The Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance (CRWFA) was established in 2016 with the goal of enhancing agriculture in the region through the improvement of local waterways, soils, and air. Agriculture, in all its forms, plays a key role in combating climate change.

In the Spring of 2018 CRWFA debuted a new no-till seeder which farmers in the region have access too. The seeder allows farmers in Vermont and New Hampshire the ability to increase their cover cropping acres through a no-till technique. Why is this important to our community and region overall? Cover Cropping and no-till are important regenerative practices which keep a growing, green plant in the ground year-round. These practices help to conserve soil, preserve and increase nutrients, and improve water quality. These practices also trap excess carbon in the soil and reduce GHG emissions.

In 2019, the CRWFA no-till seeder was used 21 times by both member and non-member farmers. Over two years, the seeder has been used to enhance nearly 1,300 acres in the Connecticut River Watershed. It's allowed farmers a more economical and efficient way to diversify the plants in their soils from milkweed to winter rye to clover and more.

Across the Twin States, these important farming practices are on the rise. In Vermont, since 2015 there's been a 61% increase in cover crops planted annually. To the east of the Connecticut River, farmers and producers in New Hampshire planted a combined 4,420 acres of cover crops in 2018.

With a little cooperation from Mother Nature, long and dry cropping seasons in the coming years will only increase these numbers. Take a close look at the farm fields near you this winter to see if you can spot the cover crops growing there to protect the land. Whether farmers are growing vegetables or raising dairy cows – we all look to ways to leave our land better than we found it. We work to be good neighbors and good members of our communities. We encourage those with questions about farming to reach out. Farmers interested in renting the seeder can find information online at www.crwfa.org

Sources

1. 2018 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Report. Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. <http://www.usdairy.com/report>. Accessed October 1, 2019.
2. de Ondarza, MB. Let's end the feed versus food debate. *Hoard's Dairyman*. January 18, 2017. <https://hoards.com/article-20263-lets-end-the-feed-versus-food-debate.html>. Accessed October 1, 2019.
3. Capper JL, Cady RA, Bauman D. The environmental impact of dairy production: 1944 compared with 2007. *J Anim Sci*. 2009; 87(suppl 6):2160-2167.
4. Dairy and the Environment. University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Research & Extension. <https://www.uaex.edu/4h-youth/activities-programs/docs/Dairy%20and%20the%20Environment.pdf>. Accessed October 1, 2019.
5. New England Dairy & Food Council Grants to Vermont Schools 2013 – 2017.
6. Dairy Delivers: The Economic Impact of Dairy Products. International Dairy Foods Association. <https://www.idfa.org/resources/dairy-delivers>. Accessed October 1, 2019.
7. December 2019 Vermont Dairy Data Summary. Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.