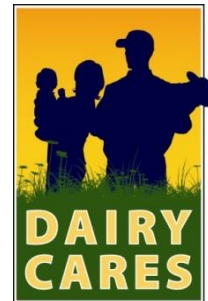


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Dairy Cares Newsletter

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More with Less: A Way of Life for California Dairies



Doing more with less is part of the daily routine at California dairy farms. Running a dairy is increasingly challenging. What's amazing is how California dairy families have managed these challenges, while making continuous improvements to efficiency and productivity.

Ninety-nine percent of California dairies are family owned and operated. Each of these families has learned to do more with less. Dairy families are producing more milk, using less water, land and energy, all while leaving a smaller carbon "hoofprint," making tremendous strides over the last several decades.

California dairy families use research-based, best management strategies to continually boost productivity. Efficient water and soil management are critical to growing nutritious feed, raising and caring for healthy cows, and producing a stable supply of safe and nutritious milk. Dairy families repurpose food production and processing byproducts, including almond hulls, culled fruits and vegetables, citrus pulp, cotton seeds, and tomato pomace, which provide nutritional value as feed ingredients and might otherwise become waste.

Another key aspect of sustainable dairy operations is efficient use of energy. California dairies have partnered with their local energy utilities to save countless kilowatt-hours annually through energy conservation. Every kilowatt-hour saved represents decreased dependence on fossil fuels and helps further lower the carbon footprint.

In addition to conserving resources, dairy families are generating renewable energy through solar and methane projects. There are 35 dairy farm solar projects in Tulare County alone, each offering an average, annual energy capacity of one megawatt. A single project of this size can offset emissions from 297 passenger vehicles driven for one year. Sixteen California dairies have already installed methane digesters, which capture biogas from dairy manure and create renewable energy. Looking ahead, California dairies will continue expanding renewable energy production.

The “more with less” mentality is nothing new to California dairy families. It is simply a way of life. Using fewer resources provides economic benefits in a market where prices can be uncertain. Beyond keeping their businesses financially stable, environmental conservation helps dairy families ensure they leave future generations with the natural resources needed to keep their family traditions alive.

California dairy families are exploring options to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Even with a long track-record of success, attaining this goal will require cooperation and funding to build infrastructure. With many uncertainties and new challenges on the horizon, one thing can be assured: California dairies will continue to innovate and do even more with even less.

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 Farm Bureau Federation, Dairy Farmers of America-Western Area Council, Dairy Institute of California, 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.