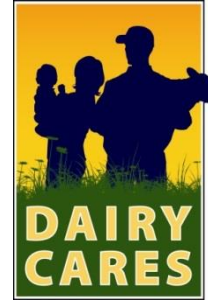


Funding provided by:



Dairy Cares Newsletter

December 2011

DairyCares.com

Dairies prove their worth to Golden State with a banner year of sustainability accomplishments

California dairy families are justifiably proud of the contributions they make to their local communities, our state and our nation. And 2011 provided many examples of how these contributions have helped to build stronger communities, a better environment and a more prosperous economy.

As the state continues to struggle with high unemployment and a crisis in real estate values, the dairy community has quietly continued as a basic engine in our economy. Production, processing and retailing of dairy products generates hundreds of thousands of jobs statewide and contributes more than \$60 billion to the overall economy. These economic benefits ripple throughout our economy, and are especially important in rural communities. Dairy farms not only are customers for other farmers' products – such as corn and alfalfa – but keep truckers busy moving these commodities from farm to dairy. And milk is a crop that is harvested every day, so dairies keep lots of workers busy year-round. That includes those on the farm milking cows and caring for cattle, veterinarians and farm service providers, and off the farm, thousands of employees reporting to work daily at milk and dairy products processing plants. These generate paychecks that are spent in local communities.

In short, in an economy where many of the state's sectors have suffered catastrophic losses, dairy has absorbed the punches to remain a reliable provider of jobs and economic benefits across California.

Even as American families work to rebound from the economic crisis – worrying about the value of their homes and the reliability of their paychecks – they know that they can depend on a supply of nutritious, healthful dairy products for their tables. Contemporary California dairy farms produce the highest quality products using efficient methods, so that consumers can rely on the goodness of dairy to sustain their families, always at a reasonable price.

Besides sustaining our health and our economy, dairy families continued to work hard in 2011 to protect and improve the environment we all share. This year, Central Valley dairy farmers launched the nation's largest dairy groundwater monitoring program, a non-profit, collaborative scientific effort to assure that dairy farming

practices are protective of California's precious groundwater resources. Dairy farmers will invest several million dollars in this effort over the next several years. California dairy farmers are already utilizing improved management practices to grow crops in balance with nature and protect groundwater, and results from groundwater monitoring will be used to develop improved management practices where needed and encourage their use.

Meanwhile, dairy farmers continued to do their part in 2011 to reduce air emissions and improve air quality in California's Central Valley. Dairy farmers across the valley have adopted management practices to reduce emissions by more than 25 percent, while dairy industry organizations continue to invest in cutting-edge research toward cleaner air. Dairy farmers will also continue their efforts to convert manure biogas to clean, green, renewable energy (cow power), building on the accomplishments of pioneering dairy farmers over the past decade.

As a New Year begins, Californians well may wonder what 2012 will bring. Will the European crisis worsen or improve? Will California's economy continue to struggle or will we see a rebound? Only the future will tell, but if the past is any indicator, we can continue to rely on dairy farmers as a positive force in the Golden State.

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, GHD, Inc., Hilmar Cheese Co., Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O'Lakes, Merck Animal Health, Milk Producers Council, Ruan Transport Corp., Western United Dairywomen, Yosemite Farm Credit and others. For information, visit DairyCares.com or call 916-441-3318.