



# Dairy Farming in Texas

**D**airy farmers are committed to Texas – they work hard to feed Texans, contribute to the economy and safeguard the environment. They live and work on family farms, where they produce safe, wholesome milk and dairy products. They boost local and state economies by providing jobs and generating tax revenue. And they strive to be good environmental stewards – they depend on the land, water and air to make a living and to raise a family.

## **Texas dairy farmers contribute to the economy**

- Texas has 558 Grade A dairies. In September 2010, the state's estimated 333,841 milk cows produced more than 731 million pounds of milk.
- Combined, the milk production and processing sectors yield a value added to the Texas economy of \$1.23 billion. This vibrant and growing industry continues to boost the rural job base and economy in Texas.
- For every 100 cows, a dairy farm creates six jobs, both direct and indirect.

## **Texas dairy farmers contribute to water quality**

- Dairy farmers follow strict national, state and local water quality guidelines and are regulated and permitted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB).
- Operating requirements include lined lagoon systems to contain on-farm water, manure management programs, continuous water testing, regular inspections and a site-specific nutrient management plan.

## **Texas dairy farmers contribute to air quality**

- Dairy farmers work with university researchers, government, industry and other experts to invest in and develop new technologies to protect the environment and conserve natural resources. Projects underway include:
  - Methane digesters – convert manure into electricity.
  - Anaerobic digestion – reduces odor by 97% by more quickly breaking down odor-causing components.
  - Manure composting – provides urban residents a source for beneficial organic nutrients.
  - Manure gasification – captures and converts energy for other beneficial uses.
- The dairy industry participates in new and ongoing air emission studies to investigate and assist in planning air quality controls.

## **Texas dairy farmers contribute to reduced water usage**

- Water used on the farm is recycled multiple times – it is used to cool milk in the milking process, to clean equipment and the milking facility and then to irrigate the farm's cropland.
- Dairy farmers are guided on water conservation practices, including modernized water storage and delivery systems, by government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, TSSWCB and TCEQ.

*The Texas Association of Dairymen ([www.milk4texas.org](http://www.milk4texas.org)) is a non-profit corporation comprised of dairy cooperatives whose members are individual milk producers in Texas.*