

June Dairy Month: It All Starts Local

by Erin McGraw
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It is National Dairy Month - the time of year when we honor all things dairy. From the dedicated farmers to the cows to the delicious cheese, yogurt, ice cream and butter they provide! Although the past months have been filled with uncertainty, one thing you can

count on is dairy farmer's commitment to feeding Americans. They continue to milk cows and plant crops every day; and many farmers across the US are donating dairy to local food banks.

In good times and bad, dairy farmers have always been part of the local story. They operate farms in all 50 states and tend to pass them down through multiple generations. "About 95 percent of dairy farms are family-owned, with fewer than 200 cows," notes St. Louis District Dairy Council Registered Dietitian Erin McGraw.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, local food is produced, distributed and marketed to consumers in a limited geographic area. Although no pre-determined distance officially defines "local," a set number of miles from a center point is often used. Because dairy is perishable, processing plants are usually located near dairy farms; meaning most milk in Illinois and Missouri is processed and sold in local stores. When you buy dairy foods, you are supporting hard-working farm families near you, and positively impacting your local community.

Dairy farmers have long been a powerful force in building communities, safeguarding farmland and providing nutritious high-quality food. With today's increased attention on small businesses' survival, it's important to note that dairy farms are the ultimate local business. In fact, most Americans live within 100 miles of a dairy farm. These small business owners are invested in their animals, land and the product they provide to consumers.

Since 1932, St. Louis District Dairy Council has brought the story of dairy foods and farmers to life through efforts across the bi-state area. As nutrition experts, they join with key community leaders to promote dairy through health education. "We share the latest research, collaborate with schools to implement programs, and connect with consumers to deliver positive dairy messages- all at the local level," states McGraw.

With the increased focus on promoting the health of Missouri and Illinois residents during this June Dairy Month, it's more important than ever to recognize the contributions of local dairy farmers. Let's raise a glass of ice-cold milk for their incredible efforts in feeding all of us. Cheers!

For additional information on dairy foods, visit www.stldairycouncil.org, call St. Louis District Dairy Council at (314)-835-9668, or e-mail emcgraw@stldairycouncil.org. For additional easy and tasty recipes, check us out on Facebook and Instagram at [STLDairyCouncil](#).

Recipes

Frozen Hot Cocoa

As temperatures warm up this summer, try this refreshing twist on hot cocoa!

Ingredients

- ¼ cup cocoa mix
- 2 Tablespoons chocolate syrup
- 1 cup low fat milk
- 1 cup ice cubes

Directions

1. Blend all ingredients in a blender until the consistency of a milkshake.
2. Serve immediately and enjoy!

Yield: 2 servings

Per Serving: Calories: 200, Carbohydrates: 46 gm, Protein: 6 gm, Calcium: 150 mg

Scrumptious Vanilla Waffles

Dairy farmers typically eat a hearty breakfast to get them through their busy morning. Try this crispy vanilla waffle recipe using local milk, topped with butter and maple syrup or fresh fruit for a hearty breakfast of your own!

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs, separated

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cups low-fat milk
- 1 tablespoon vanilla

Directions

1. Spray the waffle maker with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Into a large bowl, combine the flour and baking powder then add the salt and sugar, mixing well.
3. Using a hand mixer with the egg whites in a small bowl beat them to stiff peaks.
4. To a second bowl, whisk the egg yolks, butter, milk and vanilla together.
5. Whisk the butter mixture into the flour mixture until just combined then gently, fold in egg whites (do not stir) and pour 1/3 cup servings into your waffle maker. Cook 5-7 minutes or as directed on waffle maker.

Yield: 8 Servings

Per Serving: Calories: 302, Carbohydrates: 36gm, Protein: 6gm, Calcium: 171mg

