



# June Is **DAIRY MONTH**

## **INSIDE:**

- **Meet the  
Monroe County  
Dairy Breakfast  
Farm Family**  
— *Page 5*



# PROUDLY WISCONSIN

## -Dairy Facts-

In Wisconsin, we've been dairy farming and obsessively making cheese since before we were even a state. Check out the facts below to see why Wisconsin is recognized nationally and globally as a leader in the dairy industry and dairy is such an important industry for the state.



THE WISCONSIN DAIRY  
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# \$45.6 BILLION

This is more than the combined value  
of Florida citrus and Idaho potatoes

# 23%

of the total dairy farms in  
the U.S. are in Wisconsin



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Learn more at [WisconsinDairy.org](http://WisconsinDairy.org)

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## Number of Licensed Dairy Herds in Wisconsin:

6,033 herds

## Monthly Milk Production

Per Wisconsin Cow:  
2,085 pounds or 242 gallons

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HERALD**

This year's special section on the Monroe County Dairy Breakfast was brought to you by four local newspapers: The County Line, the Cashton Record and the Monroe County Herald.

Here's how you can reach us:

- The Cashton Record — (608) 654-7330; [cashtonrecord@mw.net](mailto:cashtonrecord@mw.net); [cashtonrecord.com](http://cashtonrecord.com)
- The County Line — (608) 337-4232; [countyline@thecountyline.net](mailto:countyline@thecountyline.net); [thecountyline.net](http://thecountyline.net)
- Hillsboro Sentry Enterprise — (608) 633-2264; [editor@HillsboroSE.com](mailto:editor@HillsboroSE.com)
- The Monroe County Herald — (608) 269-3186; [editor@monroecountyherald.com](mailto:editor@monroecountyherald.com); [monroecountyherald.com](http://monroecountyherald.com)



# Monroe County Dairy Breakfast

**When:** 7–11 a.m. Saturday, June 1, with opening ceremony at 8:30 a.m.

**Where:** Witt Family Farm, 27432 Midway Ave., Wilton. Some parking will be available on the farm, plus parking will be available at the Wilton Rod & Gun Club for those who wish to take the bus shuttle. The bus shuttle will drop off dairy breakfast attendees near the food tent and take them back to their vehicles. Shuttles will run from about 6:30 to 11:30 a.m.

**Cost:** \$5 per adult, \$3 for 6- to 10-year-olds, and free for those 5 and younger.

**Menu:** Ham and cheese omelets, sausage links, buttered toast, cheese, Culver's strawberry sundaes, doughnut holes, cookies, coffee and milk. The Monroe County All-Breeds Junior Dairy Club will sell cheese curds.

**Activities:** Educational displays, children's activities, dairy barn viewing, farm equipment display, horse-drawn wagon rides and animal education area.



Sparta Area Fire District (foreground) and Cashton Fire Department (background) stirring eggs with (clean) dust pans at the 2023 Monroe County Dairy Breakfast. Herald photo by John Gessner.

## Vernon County Dairy Breakfast

**When:** 7–11 a.m. Saturday, June 22.

**Where:** Goede Acres, LLC, located at S3787 Wire Hollow Rd, Viroqua, WI. Free Parking at the farm.

**Cost:** \$8 per adult, \$4 for children under 10-years-old, and \$12 for Steak breakfast.

**Menu:** Pancakes, steak, eggs, sausage, cheese curds, cottage cheese, milk, juice, coffee all served fresh from the farm.

**Activities:** Music, kids activities, petting zoo, games, farm education, and a kids pedal pull.

## La Crosse County Lions Club Dairy Breakfast

**When:** 6–11 a.m. Saturday, June 15.

**Where:** La Crosse County Fairgrounds N4985 Co Rd M, West Salem, WI.

**Cost:** \$5 per adult, \$4 for ages 6-10, 5 and under free.

**Menu:** Cheesy eggs, Craig's Meats sausages, Organic Valley string cheese, Westby cheese curds, Westby vanilla yogurt, Culver's custard, fruit, milk, and coffee.

**Activities:** Farm educational area, petting zoo, and more.

## Hillsboro Lions Club Dairy Breakfast

**When:** 7 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Sunday, June 23.

**Where:** Hillsboro Firemans Park, Hwy 33-82 West of Hillsboro.

**Cost:** Requested donation of \$10 for adults and \$3 for kids 10 & under.

**Menu:** Pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, hashbrowns, donuts, mixed fruit, cheese, ice cream, milk, coffee, and orange juice.

**Activities:** Music, crafts, farmers market, petting zoo, agriculture education and awareness activities, and Hillsboro Equipment display.

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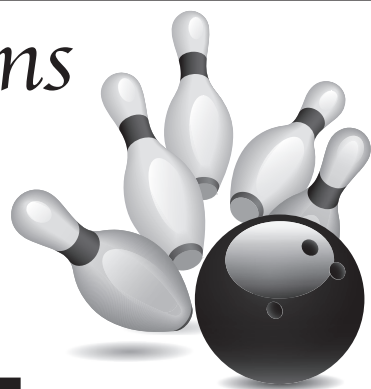
Wisconsin has over 40 dairy-farmer-led watershed groups that work hard to protect thousands of acres of land and water for future generations. Farmers care about water quality – from the water their families drink to the lakes and rivers they enjoy.

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## Cheesy Stuffed Meatball Cups

### INGREDIENTS

- 8-ounce block Mozzarella cheese divided
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 egg
- 1 cup Panko-style bread crumbs
- 1/2 Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tablespoon garlic minced
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 package thin-crust refrigerated pizza dough, 11-ounce
- 3/4 cup prepared jar marinara sauce
- Garnish: fresh chopped parsley

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Preheat oven to 350°
- 2) Cut block of mozzarella in half. Using a box grater, shred one half of cheese; set aside. Cut the other half into twelve cubes; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, combine ground beef and next eight ingredients. Combine until all ingredients are thoroughly incorporated. Shape

mixture into 12 (3-inch) balls. Press 1 cheese cube into center of ball, sealing it inside. Repeat for remaining 11 meatballs.

3) Heat butter and olive oil in heavy bottom skillet or cast-iron pan over medium heat. Gently place meatballs into pan, just to brown on each side, about 1 minute on each side. Once brown, remove and place on paper town lined baking sheet or plate to drain off excess fat.

4) Spray 12 regular-size muffin cups with cooking spray. Unroll pizza dough per package directions. Using a 3-inch round cutter, cutout 12 rounds of pizza dough and press each firmly into bottom of each cup well. Dough will not cover sides completely. Place 1/2 tablespoon of marinara sauce in each muffin cup, top with 1 meatball, another 1/2 tablespoon of sauce and sprinkle of shredded mozzarella cheese. Repeat for remaining 11 meatballs. Bake on middle rack for 25-30 minutes, or until cheese is bubbly and browned. Remove from oven and garnish with fresh parsley. Serve immediately.

**Best of Luck to  
Witt Family Farm as they  
prepare for the Monroe  
County Dairy Breakfast!  
*See you there!***

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# Witt Family Farm to host Monroe County Dairy Breakfast

By SARAH PARKER  
*The County Line*

Cows have gained a degree of independence at Witt Family Farm in rural Wilton, as a robotic system allows them to get milked on a schedule of their choosing.

The Lely Robotic System will be on display when the Witts host this year's Monroe County Dairy Breakfast, which is set for Saturday, June 1. With a robotic system, each cow decides when it's ready to be milked and enters the stall containing the robot, though the cows had to be trained with treats at first.

"They catch on and do pretty good," said farm owner Craig Witt.

June 1's event will be the first time the Monroe County Dairy Breakfast has been at a farm with robotic milkers.

When Craig and his wife Kathy Witt bought the robotic unit for their 450-acre farm in 2022, it was "a life-changer," they said. Both in their early 60s, they now don't face the unrelenting work of milking cows themselves, which allows them to focus on other agricultural tasks and at times get away from the farm.

"It gives you that flexibility to have a life outside of cows," Kathy said.

"You don't always have to get up at 5 in the morning now," added Keith Giraud of the Monroe County Dairy Breakfast Committee.

The robot also tracks how much feed the cows are eating, whether they're walking around or staying in one place, if they're in heat and when the optimal time is to breed them, and udder health.

Cathy said, "It sounds crazy, but it almost knows that a cow is sick before the cow does so you can catch it early."

The Witts sell their milk to Foremost Farms and have every-other-day pickup. They milk about 60–65 cows and have 90 altogether.

Though technological advances have changed farming considerably since the Witts started farming in 1983, certain aspects of the profession have remained the same, Craig said. The weather and the markets continue to pose challenges.

Times "could be better" for the dairy industry, Craig said. "It's not been all that good. Hopefully there's hope in the future. But there's always been ups and downs."



**Craig Witt says the cows' comfort has a high priority on the farm. Here, a cow avails itself of a spinning brush in the barn. County Line photo by Sarah Parker.**

The price of milk per hundredweight is about \$4–\$5 below "break even," Craig noted.

Kathy's off-farm income played a significant role in keeping the farm going, he added, with Kathy noting that both were able to stay home in the early years of the farm.

"Now it's really tough to make it without (off-farm income)," she said.

"Hopefully you get enough good times to help you through the bad times," Craig said.

Though Witt Family Farm was asked to host in previous years, Kathy was the one who urged the rest of the family to serve as a dairy breakfast host this year, Craig said.

"It was her decision," he laughed. "We decided to get that off our bucket list before we do retire — if we ever do."

Giraud said, "You got a beautiful farm up here, and it's always challenging nowadays

**'Witt Family Farm'**  
**continued on pg. 6**



## WITT FAMILY FARM HISTORY

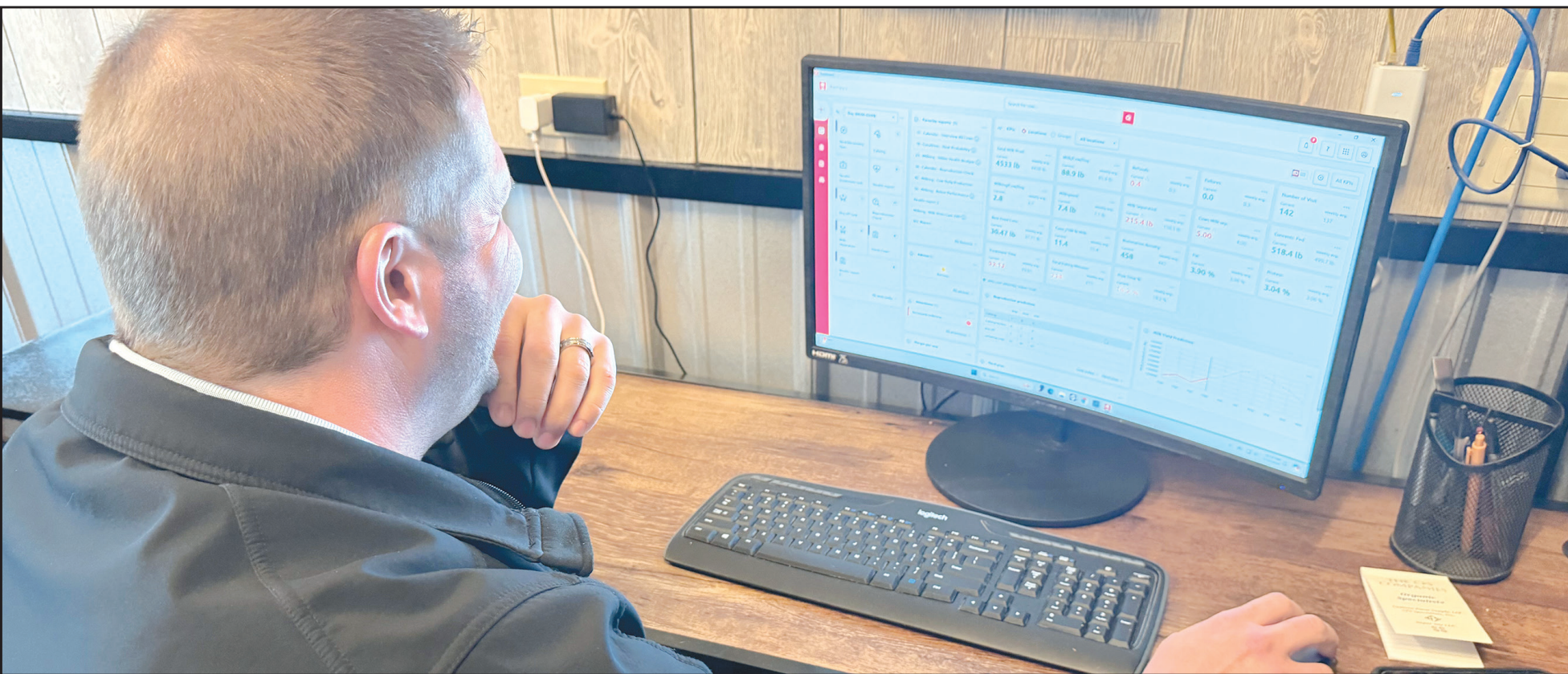
- 1993 — The Witts improved the barn, adding stalls, a liquid-manure storage system, tunnel ventilation and fans and switching to total mixed ration. At that point, they were milking 66 cows and had 10 dry cows and 70 head of young stock.

- 2005 — The Witts built a calf barn to move the calves indoors, away from the calf hutches.

- 2020 — The barn got an addition to house dry cows; this allowed the Witts to keep them nearby, rather than transfer them from another facility.

- 2022 — The family converted their tie stall barn to a free stall barn and installed a Lely Robotic Milking System, a Lely Manure Collector, an office and a utility room. They also did other work designed to improve feeding.





Ryan Witt pores over production and health data provided by the farm's robotic milking system. County Line photo by Sarah Parker.

### 'Witt Family Farm' continued from page 5

to find a smaller dairy. We're happy to have (Witt Family Farm) step up."

The Witts have been busy readying the farm ahead of the dairy breakfast.

"We got a lot of things done we normally wouldn't have done," Craig said. "We even have flowers hanging here."

Thankfully for the Witts, they have found support for the dairy breakfast beyond their immediate family, and they credited others for helping with preparations.

"Our neighbor's family has been super helpful. We're surrounded by good people, and that's another reason why we thought we could do this," Craig said.

Kathy added, "None of this would be

possible without friends, family and neighbors."

### ABOUT THE FARM FAMILY

Craig Witt, son of Philip and Sally Witt, along with his brothers Mark and Jay, grew up across the road from his current farm. Craig purchased his current farm from Harold and Angie Saxby in March 1983 and married Kathy in June 1983. They started with 60 cows and 50 head of young stock.

But the original Witt farm would remain with the family, as the Witts' son, Eric, has purchased Craig's childhood farm. Eric and his wife Lisa have four children, Bella, Melanie, Paige and Kylie. There, they raise organic crops, breeds cows and heifers and are active in the family's dairy. And if his farm duties don't keep him busy enough, Eric is vice president at Ergo Bank in Kendall. His

mother, Kathy, works at Ergo Bank as well. "We're all in this together," Kathy said.

"A lot of credit goes to our wives," Craig said. "They married into it, and they're still here."

The Witts' other son, Ryan, and his wife, Ruth, have three children, Carsen, Austin and Emma. They reside in northwest Iowa, where Ryan also is a bank vice president, plus he raises turkeys for Tyson.

The Witts said, "Although (our) sons always showed an interest in the farm and have been very supportive, (we) encouraged them to pursue college and find occupations that provided an income in addition to the farming careers they chose."

Craig's brother Jay and Jay's son Cory, who have a farm about 1 mile away, and Witt Family Farm work together on field-

work and equipment repairs, an arrangement that has lasted 40 years.

"Whenever we need help, they're there to help," Craig said.

Otherwise, Witt Family Farm employs no outside labor.

"Labor is tough to have in this industry when you're small," Craig said. "So, for the most part, I handle everything day to day in the barn here. One of us (handles everything). One person can do it."

That simplified labor arrangement is one reason the Witts decided to keep their farm relatively small. Another reason is they did not find it appealing to buy more land.

And going big is a major commitment, Craig added.

"Once you're in it, you're in it. You're really in it."

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Kyle Leis, an employee of Tim Neubauer Trucking in Sparta, hauls milk every other day from Witt Family Farm. A fourth-generation milk hauler (his great-grandfather got into the line of work in 1950), Leis started in his position nine months ago and stops at eight to 11 farms every day, mostly serving farms in Monroe County. He is a 2023 graduate of West Salem High School, and his family sold their cows in 2021. Leis said he would like to be a dairy farmer, but hauling milk is “the next best thing.” County Line photo by Sarah Parker.

# IF YOU GO:

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*Thank You*

**Witt Family Farm  
for hosting the  
2024 Dairy Breakfast**

**We appreciate the  
time and effort put  
into hosting!**

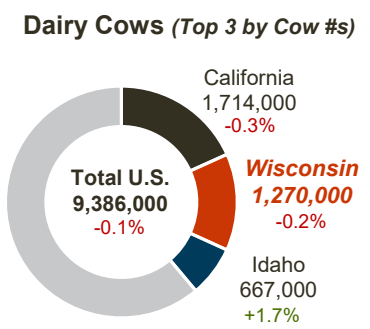
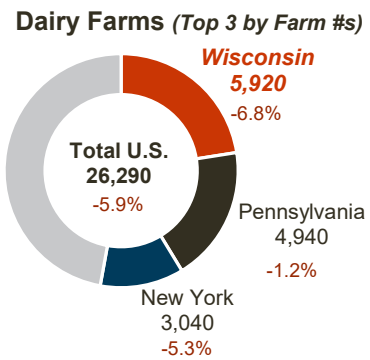
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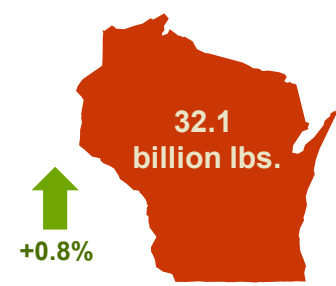


When a farm has robotic milkers, each cow is free to set its own milking schedule, as it can enter the robotic milker whenever it wants. County Line photo by Sarah Parker.

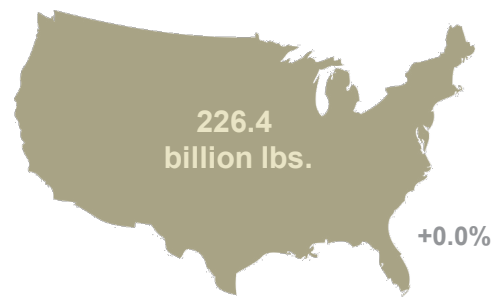




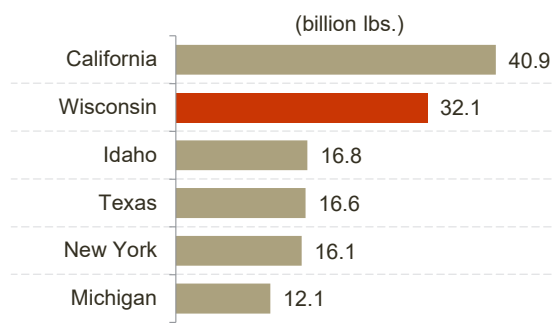
**Total Milk Production – Wisconsin**



**Total Milk Production – United States**

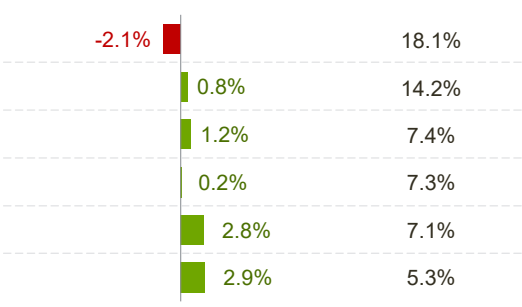


**Milk Production – Top 6 States**



**Growth**

**Share**



**Average Number of Cows per Herd**

U.S.	California	Wisconsin	Idaho
357	1,602	215	1,710
+6.1%	+3.9%	+7.1%	+6.9%



**Average Milk Production per Cow (lbs.)**

U.S.	California	Wisconsin	Idaho
24,117	23,863	25,294	25,228
+0.1%	-1.9%	+0.9%	-0.5%



**Wisconsin accounts for 14% of U.S. milk production and produced a record 32.1 billion pounds of milk in 2023.**

# Roasted Garlic and White Bean Dip

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 (16-ounce) container cottage cheese
- 1 (14 ounce) can cannellini beans , drained
- 4 roasted garlic cloves
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- Fresh herbs
- Olive oil

## INSTRUCTIONS

In the bowl of a large food processor, place cottage cheese, drained beans, garlic, salt, and pepper. Blend until smooth, about 1-2 minutes. If necessary, scrape down sides and blend another minute. Transfer dip to serving bowl. Garnish with freshly chopped herbs such as thyme and parsley, drizzle with a little olive oil if desired. Serve with fresh vegetables or crackers.

Dip can be made 1-2 days ahead of time. Store in airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

**DAIRY FARMERS OF WISCONSIN**

[www.WisconsinDairy.org](http://www.WisconsinDairy.org)

Source: USDA/NASS, Milk Production  
All growth rates (+/-) compare 2023 to 2022

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# MILK PRODUCTION UPDATE

March 2024

WI

CA

US

## Number of Cows

1.270<sub>MM</sub>  
+0.1% vs. Mar'23

1.709<sub>MM</sub>  
-0.5% vs. Mar'23

9.335<sub>MM</sub>  
-1.0% vs. Mar'23

## Milk per Cow

2,175<sub>lbs.</sub>  
+0.9% vs. Mar'23

2,145<sub>lbs.</sub>  
+1.2% vs. Mar'23

2,100<sub>lbs.</sub>  
0.0% vs. Mar'23

## Milk Production

2,762<sub>MM lbs.</sub>  
+1.0% vs. Mar'23

3,666<sub>MM lbs.</sub>  
+0.7% vs. Mar'23

19,603<sub>MM lbs.</sub>  
-1.0% vs. Mar'23

# June is Dairy Month

NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH started out as National Milk Month in 1937 as a way to promote drinking milk. It was initially created to stabilize the dairy demand when production was at a surplus, but has now developed into an annual tradition that celebrates the contributions the dairy industry has made to the world. After the National Dairy Council stepped in to promote the cause, the name soon changed to "Dairy Month."

National Dairy Month is a great way

to start the summer with nutrient-rich dairy foods. From calcium to potassium, dairy products like milk contain nine essential nutrients which may help to better manage your weight, reduce your risk for high blood pressure, osteoporosis and certain cancers. Whether it's protein to help build and repair the muscle tissue of active bodies or vitamin A to help maintain healthy skin, dairy products are a natural nutrient powerhouse. Those are just a few of the reasons that you should celebrate dairy not just in June, but all year long.



**We are proud to be in the area and a part of the agriculture communities.**

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Wisconsin's dairy industry creates 157,000 jobs, and every dollar generated by this industry produces another \$1.73 in additional revenue for the state.



## Cinnamon Swirl Yogurt French Toast

### INGREDIENTS

#### French Toast

- 2 whole medium eggs
- 4 egg whites
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 8 pieces cinnamon swirl bread

#### Topping

- 16 ounces plain yogurt
- 5 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 cups coarsely chopped fresh fruit i.e. grapes, strawberries, oranges, blueberries, peaches

Notes: To reduce prep time, use frozen French toast. Note, nutritional information may change.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1) Combine the topping ingredients, except for fruit, in small mixing bowl. Refrigerate.

2) In a medium bowl, beat together eggs, milk and cinnamon. Preheat a non-stick skillet over medium heat and lightly coat with nonstick cooking spray.

3) Dip each piece of bread into the egg mixture and coat thoroughly. Place in skillet and cook for about 2 minutes on each side.

4) To serve, cut warm French toast on the diagonal. Arrange on plate. Top with fruit, then the yogurt mixture.



**Proud to be a long time  
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**Congratulations Dairy Farm Families!**

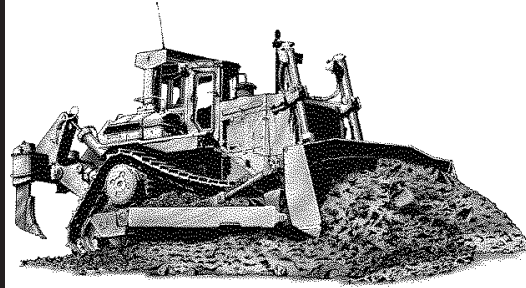
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# 43rd Annual

## Hillsboro Lions Appreciation Dairy Breakfast

### Entertainment

9:30AM–Noon  
Warner Creek Bluegrass Extravaganza

7AM–9:30AM  
Little German Band

### AG AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Displays • Dairy Products Evaluations  
Petting Zoo • Farm Safety Quiz • Identification Contest

**Serving:**  
Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs,  
Sausage, Hashbrowns,  
Donuts, Mixed Fruit, Cheese,  
Milk, Coffee, Orange Juice

**PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE**  
Sponsored by:  
The Hillsboro Lions Club  
See Our Facebook Page  
for further information: 608-547-8042

**Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**  
**7–12:30PM**  
@ The Hillsboro Firemans Park  
Hwy. 33-82 West of Hillsboro

**REQUESTED DONATION**  
Adults \$10.00 • Kids (10 & UNDER) \$3.00

- Hillsboro Hot Shots  
Serving Ice Cream
- Hillsboro Equipment  
Display
- Local Area Queens

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\*Award based on 2021 Progressive Farmer Reader Insights Tractor Study.  
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