



FAQ on Sustainable Dairy Farming



**What is
sustainable
nutrition?**



Answer

Simply put, sustainable nutrition is the ongoing science-based pursuit of providing affordable, accessible, nutrient-rich foods that can nourish the world's growing population while also protecting environmental resources now and for future generations.

**How do dairy
farmers
manage cow
manure?**



Answer

On many farms, manure is collected, then separated into liquid and solid components and stored securely. Manure storage facilities are strictly regulated, and dairy farmers work with local experts and government agencies to ensure best practices are followed.

Solid manure can be dried, and then used by farmers as bedding for cows or applied to cropland. The liquid portion of the manure can also be used to fertilize fields. Some farms have methane digesters, which convert manure into clean, renewable energy for the farm and surrounding community.

**How do dairy
farmers protect
the soil?**



Answer

Soil health is important for growing crops, feeding cows, and protecting the environment. Two ways farmers do this is by planting cover crops and implementing no-till farming. Cover crops prevent soil erosion by covering and protecting soil in fields during times when the primary crop is not growing.

“No-till” farming helps maintain good soil structure. This technique focuses on planting directly into the previous crop residue without disturbing the land. Both practices prevent highly productive topsoil from eroding off farm fields—important to both the farmer and the environment.

**How do dairy
farms upcycle
food waste?**



Answer

Dairy farmers routinely feed their cows byproducts from the processing of other foods and fibers, such as almond hulls, canola meal, citrus pulp and more. These products, which were once thrown away, have nutritional value to cows. Cows can “unlock” the energy and nutrients in these products that would otherwise go to waste.

**Do dairy
farmers protect
and conserve
water?**



Answer

Water is a valuable resource on dairy farms. Farmers use the same water several times: as drinking water for cows (who prefer warm water); to cool the cows with a fine spray when it is hot; to wash farm equipment; and clean the barn floor. After cleaning the barns, the nutrient-rich water can be collected and stored, then used to fertilize nearby fields and grow crops that are fed to the cows. From 2007-2017, research showed that the amount of water needed to produce a gallon of milk declined 30%.

Do dairy farm families have a long-term commitment to environmental care?



Answer

Comparing 1944 and 2007, producing a gallon of milk generated 63% less carbon, uses 90% less land and 75% less manure. The U.S. dairy industry has committed to the ambitious goal of net zero carbon greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

**Do dairy
farm families
provide quality
animal care?**



Answer

Yes. Cows are the center of the dairy farm and caring for them is both a passion and a priority. Dairy farmers work 365 days a year to ensure that their cows have nutritious food, clean water, comfortable bedding and regular veterinary care.

**How are
dairy farmers
committed to
mitigating the
effect of climate
change?**



Answer

Many dairy farmers innovate and adopt new practices and technologies to produce the same quantity and quality of food using fewer natural resources. American's dairy farmers have set aggressive environmental sustainability goals to achieve greenhouse gas neutrality, optimize water usage and improve water quality by 2050.