

We're Called Cheeseheads for a Reason

Written by Jeff Smith, State Senator District 31

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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/farm-family-s450.jpg>



Sen. Smith celebrates June as dairy month by writing about our prominence in the nation's cheese making industry, salutes dairy farmers and encourages everyone to attend one of the many dairy breakfasts throughout Wisconsin.

Eau Claire - If you have any doubts about our commitment to dairy consider the facts. To start with, June is Dairy Month in Wisconsin. Every weekend there are a number of dairy breakfasts around the state. You can [check the list from the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin](#) for a delicious breakfast near you. Typically hosted by a dairy farm you can learn a lot about what goes on at the farm and see plenty of neighbors.

While our state is a national leader in cranberry and potato production, dairy is still king in Wisconsin. Despite the loss of many farms in our state, we've still held on to the title of America's Dairyland – and for good reason. We have over a million cows and almost 7,000 dairy farms in Wisconsin, which is more than any other state. Dairy alone accounts for \$45.6 billion to our economy in Wisconsin. If these numbers didn't convince you, the fact that Packer fans wear foam cheese hats to games is evidence enough that we take our title of America's Dairyland very seriously.

While milk is an important part of any healthy diet, cheese rules. On average Americans consume 27 pounds of cheese each year. That's a lot of cheese and 90% of our Wisconsin milk goes into cheese making. Everyone, it seems, loves their Mac & Cheese but you just can't beat those squeaky fresh cheese curds. You can pick up your favorite cheese curd flavors

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directly from the creameries spread throughout western Wisconsin, but be sure to stop in Ellsworth, the cheese curd capital of the world. If you're like me you can't resist a quick stop.

It all starts with fresh milk from healthy cows, but there are so many hardworking professionals that go to work every day so you can enjoy the best dairy products in the country. From our dedicated farmers and milk haulers to the technicians and cheesemakers of Wisconsin – we celebrate them and their work during Dairy Month!

Year after year, Wisconsin cheesemakers prove their products are incomparable. From Colby to cheddar; from Gouda to asiago; from string cheese to cheese curds, we're spoiled here with the best tasting cheeses in the world. With over 1,200 licensed cheesemakers producing over 600 types of cheeses, we have almost twice as many cheese choices than any other state. Wisconsin is proudly the home of world champion cheesemakers year after year. Our cheesemakers produce 26% of the cheese consumed in America, which amounted to 3.39 billion pounds in 2020.

Our cheesemakers export their products around the world with the leading importers of our dairy products being Canada, China and Japan. Okay, maybe the deep-fried cheese curds aren't the healthiest food, but you can't beat that very special treat to share with friends.



Don't just take it from me – athletes can also vouch for Wisconsin dairy. Fun fact: chocolate milk is a proven best source for sport recovery. In fact, studies conducted in high school sports camps found that athletes drinking chocolate milk saw greater improvement in their performance over those who drank a sugary sports drink. It appears chocolate milk is not just for fun and flavor.

Dairy breakfasts are more than just about the food. It's about learning where our milk comes from. As visitors tromp around the grounds, they're able to take hay rides, examine the latest equipment and even watch demonstrations. Of course, the animals are often the main attraction for young kids.

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Dairy breakfasts have proven to be extremely successful over the years. Host families take time out during a very busy time of year to make it a memorable experience for every visitor. Show your appreciation for our farmers and members of Wisconsin's agricultural industry by visiting a dairy breakfast this June and don't be shy about showing off your cheesehead. [Find your nearest dairy breakfast](#) and bring the family out this month to enjoy some live music, farm activities and the best breakfast you could ask for.