



Harvest of the Month: Dairy

Video transcript

Video Available At:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fB_e-UgkZtM

This month's Montana Harvest of the Month is Dairy! All dairy products come from milk from mammals. Although milk most commonly comes from cows, Montana also has goat and sheep milk producers. There are several dairy cattle breeds including: Holstein, Jersey, Brown Swiss, Guernsey, Ayrshire, and Milking Shorthorn. Holstein cows produce the most milk of all breeds.

Dairy cows live on farms. They are fed high quality feed, a combination of forage, grains, protein feeds like soybeans, minerals, and vitamins. Farmers work hard to make sure cows are healthy. In Montana, most cows are housed in free stall barns. Most cows are milked two to three times a day, spending less than 30 minutes a day in the milking parlor. Milking machines are attached to the cow's udder and milk is pumped into storage tanks, never touching human hands. On average, each cow produces six to seven gallons per day, which is 2,500 gallons of milk each year!

The milk is transported from the farm to one of Montana's dairy processing plants in an insulated, stainless steel truck, called a tank truck. At the processing plant, milk goes through numerous steps, including pasteurization and homogenization, before packaging. Pasteurization is a food safety process that heats the milk to a very high temperature to destroy harmful bacteria that may exist. The heating is followed by a rapid cooling process. Following pasteurization, the milk is forced through smaller and smaller holes in a process called homogenization. This makes the milk fat particles small enough so they can float throughout the milk. Without homogenization, the milk fat floats to the top and you need to shake the milk before drinking it. Milk is then packaged or turned into other dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, and sour cream.

After packaging, the milk and dairy products are distributed to grocery stores, schools, restaurants, and other institutions in refrigerated trucks. Dairy products are rich in calcium, potassium, protein, and are often fortified with vitamin D. Calcium helps our body to maintain healthy bones and to carry out other vital body functions. Vitamin D helps our body absorb calcium and promotes bone growth, too. Sunlight helps our body make its own vitamin D, but we usually don't get enough, so we add it to dairy because it is such a good partner with calcium. Let's make a delicious recipe featuring Montana dairy products — a Fruit Smoothie!

Dig Deeper

Get more information, register, or download resources:

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mtharvestofthemonth.org

Dairy products are a delicious part of a healthy diet. Enjoy some Montana Dairy products today! The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases a different Montana grown food each month in Montana communities. We hope you will join us in tasting Montana this month!



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org.

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