Milk’s Journey

On the Farm

Farmers care for the cows daily to ensure they are healthy.

Milk Factory

After the whole milk is approved, it is put into silos to go through pasteurization, homogenization, separation, and further processing.

Store

Milk Products

How a cow makes milk

Cattle are called ruminants, meaning they have one large stomach with four separate compartments. Each compartment helps break down the nutrients within the food in a different way. The broken-down substances can be utilized by the dairy cow to make highly nutritious milk.

1. Food enters the mouth of the cow.
2. Food goes in the rumen where it is mixed with bacteria to break down into small pieces.
3. After the rumen, it goes into the reticulum. Then, the nutrients from the food go into the bloodstream.
4. Then, the softened food (cud) is sent back up to the cow’s mouth, where it is re-chewed before going back down into her stomach to continue digestion.
5. After the cow swallows her cud, it goes into the omasum and then abomasum where further digestion occurs, and more nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream.
6. Finally, after all nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream, they are carried into the udder to produce milk.

Top three dairy breeds

Holstein
- Black and white
- About 1,500 lbs. at mature weight
- Originated from the Netherlands and was first imported to the U.S. in the 1850s.

Jersey
- Light brown
- Originated from the Island of Jersey, a small British Island in the English Channel
- Milk is higher in butterfat

Brown Swiss
- Silver to dark brown and have large ears
- Originated in the Alps of Switzerland
- Milk is ideal for making cheese because it is high in protein-to-fat ratio

Dairy as a commodity in Texas

Texas ranks in the top five states in the U.S. in dairy production.

About 600,000 cows produce around 15 billion lbs. of milk in a year.