



The Dairy Industry *in* *Tulare County*

By Tom Shultz
Dairy Farm Advisor

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

The dairy industry began in Tulare County about 1860. The first creamery was built in 1890 and by the turn of the century there were 7,000 cows. Today in the county there are 337,000 cows and an equal number of heifers and calves raised as replacements.

This county is first in the United States for total cow numbers and milk production, while California ranks first in the nation for milk production and total milk cash receipts. Individual cow milk production in Tulare County is about 10 percent higher than the national average, while the herd size is 12 times larger.

Tulare County yielded 23% of the California total of 30.4 billion pounds milk produced in 1999 and was 32% of the San Joaquin Valley regional production. On a local basis this represents 30% (\$920 million) of the 3.1 billion dollar 1999 agriculture products from this county. Sales of dairy cattle and other dairy-related products and by-products, combined with these milk product sales, show the dairy industry as the number one income generator for the county.

In the past several years there have been numerous new dairies built here. Some of the new dairies are transferred from the Los Angeles area, as well as a steady lateral growth of existing local farms. Nearly all local dairies are incorporated family units with many being second and third generation farm businesses.

Tulare County dairy farms are heavily concentrated around the town of Tulare in which is located Dairyman's/Land-O-Lakes. This creamery has 220 patrons within a 45-mile pickup radius and receives about 12 million pounds of milk daily, of which about 15 percent is transshipped to Los Angeles bottling. Approximately 33% of the total butter and milk powder produced in California is manufactured yearly by this Tulare creamery.

Real Fresh Creamery and Knudsen-Kraft Food Products are located in Visalia and process cottage cheese, powdered milk, sour cream, butter, and UHT products. Over one-third of

dairymen ship milk to another cooperative, California Dairies Inc., with processing both in and outside of Tulare County.

The average size dairy herd in Tulare County is nearly 1,200 cows, with all animals in corrals equipped with shaded rest areas. Many corral manger feeding areas are equipped with automated misters to reduce summer heat stress. Liquid and solid manure is recycled to irrigate and fertilize adjacent cropland.

Over 95 percent of the cows in the county are Holsteins, and a mature animal may weigh 1,400 lbs. and will consume an average of 50 lbs. dry feed and 25 gallons of water daily. A large part of the feed ration is made up of agricultural by-products, such as almond hulls, citrus and sugarbeet peels, cottonseed, cull fruit and vegetables, and other local feedstuffs..

The average cow is worth \$1,300 and investment per cow is about \$3,500 for facilities. At least 65% of the cows are bred artificially, and this is done about 60 days after calving. Nearly 65% of Tulare County cows are on Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) test, and the top herd in the county had over a 29,000 lb. average per cow for the standard 305-day lactation.

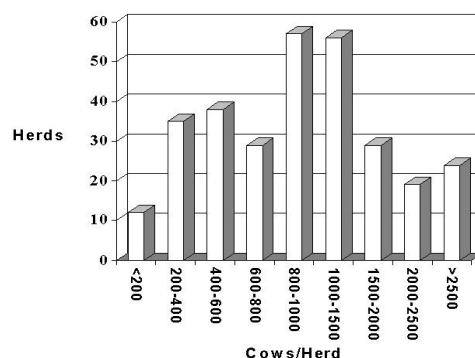
Depending on barn design and equipment installed, a person may milk an average of 100 cows hourly. About 50 gallons of water per cow are used daily for washing her and milking utensils. A typical 1000-cow dairy will have a 1 million cubic foot storage lagoon for recycling water.

Numerous dairies have manure solids separators enabling undigested fiber to be recycled for corral bedding or composted for organic fertilizers. Many farms also are equipped with heat exchangers, which transfer heat from milk that is being cooled prior to shipment, in order to partially heat the water used for washing milking equipment.

In summary, the favorable production conditions for dairying in Tulare County combined with the managerial skills of the local dairymen have resulted in a growing, efficient industry. Visitors from several states and many foreign countries frequently visit local dairies and processing installations for comparative ideas.

Revised May 2000

Tulare County Herd Sizes 2000



TULARE COUNTY DAIRY STATISTICS

Total Dairy Herds and Cows in Tulare County			
Year	Herds	Cows	Cows/Herd
1930	1,100	35,130	31
1940	700	33,420	48
1950	400	45,000	112
1960	365	56,000	153
1970	230	63,000	274
1980	236	120,695	511
1990	268	208,504	778
1995	286	267,500	935
1998	291	312,340	1073
1999	299	337,685	1132

Source: Dairy Inspector Office, Visalia, CA (includes all herds)

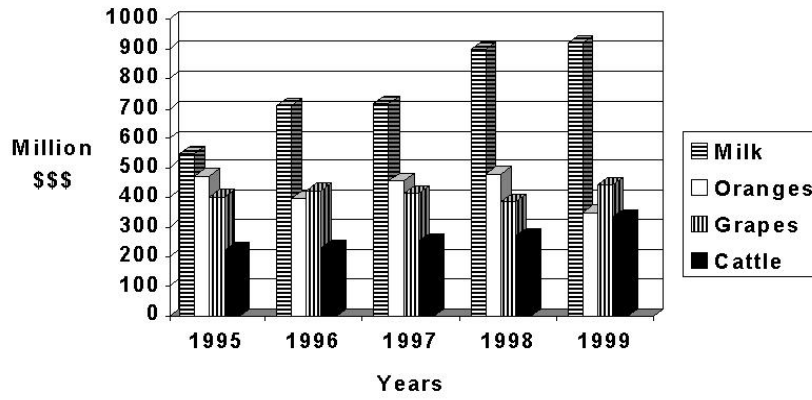
Tulare DHIA Herd Production					
1999 Top Ten Herds			County DHIA Herd Averages		
Herd Size	Times Milking	Pounds Milk ECM, 305 Day	Year	Pounds Milk	Pounds Butterfat
1546	3x	29,128	1928	8,626	296
567	3x	27,355	1940	8,962	321
715	3x	26,901	1950	9,918	361
1760	2x	26,875	1960	11,929	443
3275	3x	26,531	1970	14,508	540
1225	2x	26,500	1980	16,304	603
957	2x	26,196	1990	18,967	703
309	2x	25,775	1998	20,949	756
2963	3x	25,393	1999	21,367	771
1805	2x	25,193			

Source: Farm Advisor Survey - UC Cooperative Extension, Visalia, CA

Tulare County Top Ag \$\$\$						
Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
\$ millions \$						
Milk	547	569	712	719	899	920
Oranges	375	472	423	455	479	349
Grapes	364	402	396	415	387	443
Cattle	223	223	229	253	271	332

Source: Tulare County Ag Commissioner's Annual Report

Tulare County Ag Dollars



1999 Tulare County Top Ag \$\$\$

