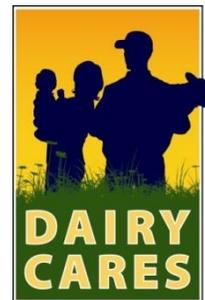


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A lesson in planet-smart dairy

When it comes to being environmental stewards, California dairy farmers have a lot to be proud of. Through increasing efficiency and advancing cow health and nutrition, farms in the Golden State have been reducing their carbon “hoofprint” for decades. Taking this milestone to the next level, California is the first dairy region in the world to set a goal for a 40% reduction of methane emissions from dairy manure. This makes for some bizarre headlines as researchers, state officials, and dairy farmers work together to explore all options for reducing emissions from cows’ breath, burps, flatulence, and manure. Yet, among the quest for world-leading large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, California’s dairy farmers are doing a wide variety of things that are good for the planet. Here are **15 interesting facts about how California dairy farms are protecting the planet.**



1. California is leading the nation in reducing dairy methane emissions.¹
2. More than 100 California dairy farms have installed solar energy systems to meet their energy needs and help the state meet its clean energy goals.
3. In addition to on-farm solar production, a growing number of dairy farms (20 to date with about 20 more coming online soon) are also producing renewable energy via dairy manure digesters.
4. One cow can produce enough transportation fuel to drive a car across the country. Five cows can power one house for a year.²
5. Currently, dairy digesters in California provide an annual greenhouse gas reduction equivalent to removing more than 90,000 cars from the road.³
6. Dairy digesters are providing the largest greenhouse gas reduction of all investments in California’s climate action portfolio.³

7. The Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP) ranks among the top three California climate action programs in offering the most effective greenhouse gas reduction (least cost per metric ton of reduction).³
8. DDRDP funding is being matched by private funds at an average ratio of 2.5 to 1. California's \$260 million will be matched by another \$650 million.³
9. In addition to the development of digesters, dairy farms across the state are using a variety of technologies to reduce methane emissions from manure. California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)'s new Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP) is supporting dairy farm efforts to further reduce emissions. Additionally, researchers continue to explore potentially cost-effective ways to reduce enteric emissions (emissions that come directly from the cow).⁴
10. More than 20 dairy farms across the Central Valley have been using drip irrigation to grow alfalfa and corn. These pioneers have worked with partner organizations and technology providers to address challenges and develop new models for sustainable dairy farming that are improving water conservation and protection. Their efforts have resulted in up to 47% water savings.
11. An estimated 41 percent of California dairy feed consists of agricultural byproducts, including almond hulls, culled fruits and vegetables, citrus pulp, cotton seeds, brewer's grain, tomato pomace, and more.⁴
12. Through investing in energy-efficient technologies, individual farms have cut energy use up to 20%.⁵
13. California dairy farms have saved or replaced more than 45 million kilowatt-hours of energy—enough to supply electricity to more than 5,000 homes for a year.⁵
14. A growing number of dairy farms are working with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to convert diesel-powered feed mixers to electric. Each conversion can save up to 20 tons of nitrogen oxides (NOx) per year. That's the equivalent of taking more than 1,200 cars off the road.⁶
15. California dairy farmers are playing a key role in preserving the tricolored blackbird, an endangered species. In 2017 alone, CA dairy farmers worked with partners such as Audubon California to save more than 55,000 tricolored blackbirds (more than one third of the entire population).⁷

California's dairy families are committed to planet-smart farming practices. To learn more, visit [DairyCares.com](https://dairycares.com).

Sources:

1. Livestock Anaerobic Digester Database (Ag-STAR, EPA)
2. California Bioenergy
3. 2018 Annual Report to the Legislature on California Climate Investments Using Cap-and-Trade Auction Proceeds
4. California Dairy Research Foundation
5. Dairy Cares compiled aggregate data from Pacific Gas & Electric Company and Southern California Edison
6. Dairy Cares data from dairy farm
7. Audubon California

Dairy Cares is a statewide coalition supporting economic and environmental sustainability and responsible animal care. Our members include Bar 20 Dairy Farms, California Cattlemen's Association, California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Campaign, California Dairy Research Foundation, California Farm Bureau Federation, Dairy Farmers of America-Western Area, Dairy Institute of California, F & R Ag Services, GHD, Inc., Hilmar Cheese Co., Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O'Lakes, Merck Animal Health, Milk Producers Council, Ruan Transport Corp., Western United Dairymen, Yosemite Farm Credit and others. For information, visit [DairyCares.com](https://dairycares.com) or call 916-441-3318. To subscribe to the monthly e-newsletter, contact dairycares@gmail.com.