



## Wisconsin Dairy Industry: DATCP Announces Key Insights from Producer Survey

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has announced the results of its 2024 Dairy Producer Survey. The survey found that 99% of respondent dairy farms identify as being family owned and 81% expect to still be dairy farming in five years. Other top-line findings indicate that respondents prioritize conservation practices and provide jobs that boost the state’s economy.

The 2024 survey results are published on DATCP’s [Dairy Development webpage](#), along with the results of previous editions. The survey was sent to more than 5,400 bovine milk producer license holders across Wisconsin. In total, 1,611 responses were received, equivalent to a 30% response rate. The survey asked 34 questions on topics including marketing, conservation practices, business structure, labor, and succession planning.

“Wisconsin is known as America’s Dairyland, and this survey confirms that this tradition will continue for future generations,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. “Wisconsin, with its rich land and water resources, is the place for dairy, and producers are committed to ensuring the industry is sustainable for years to come.”

Romanski continued, “Thank you to the Wisconsin dairy producers who took time to participate and share their valuable perspective. These results will help government officials, educational institutions, and industry partners to develop policies, implement programs, and offer services to address identified challenges and further strengthen the future of Wisconsin dairy.”

Key insights from the 2024 results include the following:

- Respondents operate family-owned farms, and many plan to continue this tradition.
  - 99% of respondent dairy farms identified themselves as family owned.
  - 97% of respondents identified as being family owned and having one generation or more, and one family or more, working on their dairy farm.
  - 51% of the responses have identified a successor; of these, about 97% plan to be succeeded by their spouse, child/children, or other family.
- Respondents prioritize sustainability, conservation, and land stewardship.
  - 98% raise their dairy farm’s cows/calves here in Wisconsin.
  - 81% indicated the ability to grow 80-100% of their own feed.
  - 67% have a nutrient management plan.
  - 57% work with a conservation professional to maintain/improve land and water resources.
  - 60% are incorporating cover crop practices.
- Respondents prioritize working with professionals.
  - 88% work with veterinarians on a regular basis.
  - 82% work with a nutritionist for their dairy animal feed program.

- Respondents provide jobs for Wisconsin's economy.
  - 68% have employees (including paid family members) on their payroll.
  - 36% provide housing as a benefit.
  - If needing additional labor:
    - 91% would consider hiring a military veteran.
    - 82% would consider hiring a first-generation immigrant.
- Respondents are planning for their future.
  - 81% believe their operation will continue to be dairy farming in five years. Of these:
    - 77% anticipate milking about the same number of cows.
    - 71% anticipate they will farm the same number of acres.
  - The survey's most frequently identified challenges to operating a dairy farm and to the state's dairy industry were:
    - Regulation.
    - Balancing milk supply and demand.
    - Aging facilities.
    - Day-to-day expenses.
    - Inability to find labor.

In addition to the survey questions, participants had the opportunity to provide comments. More than 320 comments were submitted, covering a wide range of topics including stagnant milk prices, rising costs, and tight profit margins.

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