

## The Iowa Dairy Story — Educating Young Consumers

### A.S. Leaflet R2790

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#### Summary and Implications

Over 12,000 students have attended the Iowa Dairy Story presented at the Dairy Center on the Northeast Iowa Community College Campus, Calmar, Iowa. Targeting third, fourth, and fifth graders, up to eight lessons plus tours of the 250-cow operating dairy, and interactive nutritional information educates them on how milk is created and its' importance in human growth and development. An average of 1,000+ students each year learn the origin of milk, proper dairy care and handling, milk quality and safety, dairy products, and nutrition. A total of 38 schools have participated in the program. A 2012 teacher survey was conducted to assess program (content, communications, and presenters) as well as 4 pre-trip and 3-post trip lessons (1-10 system; 1 = poor; 5 = avg.; 10 = excellent). Average overall teacher evaluation scores for these categories were: 9.83, 10, 9.92, 9.64, 9.3, 9.82, 9.82, 9.73, 9.73, and 9.64, respectfully. The program rates very high with teachers and students.

#### Introduction

The Iowa's Dairy Story program was established and coordinated by a three way partnership between Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and its county Extension Councils, Northeast Iowa Community College, and the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation. The Northeast Iowa Community-Based Dairy Foundation, a grassroots organization that includes dairy farm families and industry professionals, partners with Iowa State University Extension to educate youth of Northeast Iowa about the importance of dairying and dairy products through a program called Iowa's Dairy Story. The curriculum and field trip to Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation helps students, primarily 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, learn and appreciate that milk is not just purchased in the store. It comes from cows, on family based dairy farms and that the industry supports the economy with a variety of jobs.



Since the program started 12 years ago, averages of 1,000 students a year have learned about the dairy industry.

The program not only includes interactive nutritional information on the value of dairy products in a healthy diet, but it also takes students on the journey of how green grass becomes milk in their glass with the help of true economic engines-dairy cows. The students not only tour the 250-cow dairy at The Dairy Center, they learn the history of dairying, how the ruminant digestive system functions, the leading state and national milk-producing regions, the seven breeds of dairy cows, and the health impacts of consuming dairy foods. They see how cows are cared for from the calf barn to the milking parlor. Each group makes homemade ice cream in a can and spins a Milk Cart Quiz to re-enforce their learning.

There have been a total of 38 schools participating in the program, plus after-school and summer programs. Many schools receive funding for the bus costs from Farm Bureau Agricultural grants. Area schools attending Dairy Story include Decorah, St. Patrick's, Waterville Elementary, West Central, North Fayette, CFS, New Hampton, Valley, Postville, St Joseph's, Waukon Elementary, Central, Howard-Winneshiek and Nashua-Plainfield. A 2012 teacher survey of these schools was conducted to assess the program (content, communications, and presenters) as well as the 4 pre-trip and 3-post trip lessons (1-10 system; 1 = poor; 5 = average; 10 = excellent). Average overall teacher evaluation scores for these categories were: 9.83, 10, 9.92, 9.64, 9.3, 9.82, 9.82, 9.73, 9.73, and 9.64, respectfully.

The program rates high with teachers and students, of which over 12,000 have visited for the Iowa Dairy Story. The program is guided by Iowa State University Extension personnel, volunteers, and Dairy Center staff who lend first-hand experience to bring the Iowa Dairy Story to life.

The website is [www.iowadairycenter.com](http://www.iowadairycenter.com). Individuals seeking free self-guided tours of the Dairy Center are welcome weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Dairy Center is located at 1527 Highway 150, Calmar, Iowa.

