

Article 2

How many people does it take to make a glass of milk?

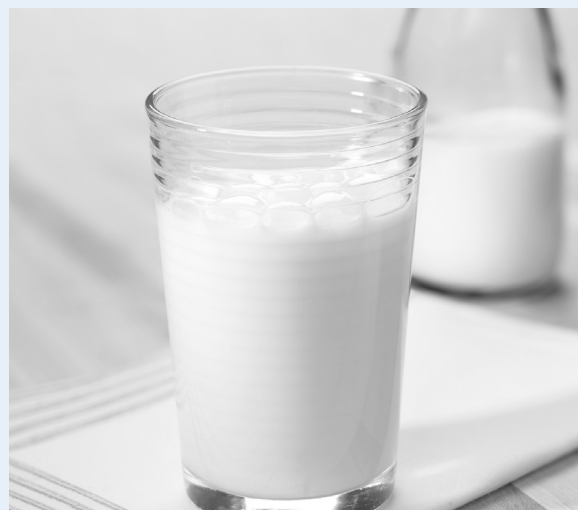
When you drink a glass of milk, do you think about who made it and how it got into your fridge at home? Every product that we use or eat comes from somewhere and is made by someone.

The food we eat is one important way we are connected to our communities. A glass of milk connects you to people who live in rural and urban communities. You might be surprised to learn how many people it takes to get dairy products from a farm to your table.

Over 10 000 Albertans rely on milk to make a living. These people include veterinarians, nutritionists, researchers, professors, salesmen, milk haulers, store employees, and processing plant workers.

Many communities also rely on milk. Dairy farmers hire people from nearby communities to work on their farms. Farmers also buy food and other products from stores in the community. Sometimes, they buy seed, fertilizers, and machines in the community to plant crops that feed their cows.

The journey of milk starts on the farm, just as it has for centuries, with a farmer and a cow. Early dairy farmers often had a close connection with the people who used their products, and often delivered those products directly to their neighbours. Today, dairy farmers rely on **milk haulers**, or people who are licensed to collect the milk, to deliver it to dairy processing plants.



Did You Know?

One serving from the Milk and Alternatives food group can consist of 250 ml of milk, 50 grams of cheese, or 175 grams of yogurt.

How does your milk consumption compare to the average Canadian boy or girl? According to Statistics Canada, 9 to 13 year old boys consume about 2.5 servings of milk products while girls consume about 2 servings per day.

One cow produces about 9 623 kilograms of milk per year. Weigh a litre of milk. How many grams does it weigh? How many litres of milk does the cow produce in a year? Check your results at the end of the article!

Do you know someone who, in the past, got their milk directly from the farm? Ask them how the taste and texture of old-fashioned dairy milk compares with the taste and texture of milk we buy in stores today. What kind of containers do they remember getting milk, butter, or cream in?

The average dairy farm in Alberta has about 127 cows. In 2010, there were 601 dairy farms in Alberta. Using technology available today, one cow produces about 9 623 kilograms of milk per year.

When it's time for milking, cows are moved into a **milking parlour**, a part of the barn where farmers keep the milking machines. Modern milking machines use computer technology and robotics to milk each cow once or twice a day. Some machines even let the cows decide when they are ready to be milked.

Do you ever wonder who builds the machines that make our lives easier? The people who design and build these specialized machines need to know about computers and robots, as well as have a good understanding of how to milk a cow.

Did You Know?

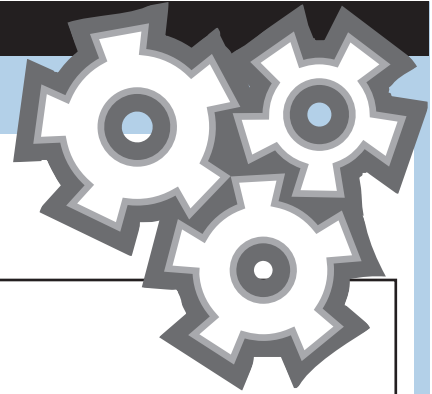
At one milking parlour in Idaho, U.S., they milk up to 60 000 cows.

What differences would you expect to see if you compared this farm in Idaho with an average dairy farm in Alberta?

Researcher's Corner

Exploring Human Activities

Make a list of all the jobs or occupations you can think of that are connected to Alberta's dairy industry.



Dairy farmers depend on the network of people who are involved in helping to produce, transport, and distribute milk and dairy products. Select three of the occupations these people have. How would you advertise their jobs? Write a job description for each. Use the **T-Chart** below or make one of your own.

Occupation	Job Description:
Occupation	Job Description:
Occupation	Job Description:

Did you come close to finding out that 9 623 kilograms of milk converts to 9 850 litres of milk?

This is about 39 400 250 ml glasses of milk.