

# What's Happening On PA Dairy Farms

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The survey respondents estimated their cows averaged 17,476 pounds of milk per year. Only 12.0% of the herds averaged less than 14,000 pounds per cow. Higher milk production per cow is definitely common as 22.9% of the herds averaged more than 20,000 pounds per cow. More than half (51.7%) of the herds averaged between 16,000 and 20,000 pounds per cow.

Most dairy producers raise at least some of their feed. The farms responding to the survey averaged 222 acres of cropland and pasture. However, the median farm acreage was only 160 acres. The average farm size was

significantly affected by several farms cropping at least 1000 acres. Over one-fourth (26.9%) of the farms had fewer than 100 acres. Only 12.5% of the farms were greater than 400 acres. A very small portion (0.6%) of the state's herds reported having no cropland and buying all feed for their cows.

Crop acreage on Pennsylvania dairy farms is divided evenly between corn and grass/alfalfa hay (Table 2).

Remaining acreage is generally made up of permanent pasture. The farms averaged 80 acres of corn, 77.3 acres of hay, and 25.7 acres of permanent pasture. Average farm acreage is

significantly greater than median crop acres because of the number of farms that reported small acreage or no corn, hay, or permanent pasture acreage and by farms with large crop acreage. The importance of hay and corn are emphasized by the fact that only 6.1% and 4.2%, respectively, of the farms reported no corn or hay acreage. Permanent pasture is less important as 14.6% of the farms reported no pasture acreage and fully 39.0% reported 10 acres or less of permanent pasture. Grazing hay fields is not very common as 64.8% of the farms did not graze hay fields and only 13.8% grazed more than 20 acres of their hay fields.

Other crop acreage was minimal on most farms and was planted primarily to soybeans and small grains.

**Table 2. Average and median crop acreage on Pennsylvania dairy farms (1997).**

| Crop              | Average Acres | Median Acres | Percent Reporting |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Corn              | 80.6          | 50           | 6.1               |
| Alfalfa/          | 77.3          | 50           | 4.2               |
| Grass Hay         |               |              |                   |
| Permanent Pasture | 25.7          | 18           | 14.6              |

Summary: The survey results indicate a average herd size of 65.3 cows per farm and a median herd size of 52 cows. The state has many small herds with 25.4% of the farmers managing less than 40 cows. However, 74.6% of the herds are producing more than 16,000 pounds per cow. Most farms have a fairly even distribution of corn and hay. Median crop acreage is much smaller than average crop acreage. Only 61.0% of the dairy producers reported more than 10 acres of permanent pasture.

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# Smart Yields



|                               |             |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>H-2515</b> 110 Day RM      |             |
| Kermit Martin Quarryville, PA |             |
| H-2515                        | 192.5 Bu./A |
| P-3394                        | 180.1 Bu./A |
| Fisher Welles Elmira, NY      |             |
| H-2515                        | 215.2 Bu./A |
| DK595                         | 186.8 Bu./A |
| Rinaldi Farm Easton, PA       |             |
| H-2515                        | 173.1 Bu./A |
| P33V08                        | 154.6 Bu./A |

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>H2390BT</b> 102 Day RM       |             |
| Clear Meadow Farm Whitehall, MD |             |
| H2390BT                         | 187.1 Bu./A |
| H-2382                          | 180.3 Bu./A |
| P35N05                          | 186.5 Bu./A |
| 1997 - 98 Multi Location Data   |             |
| H-2390BT                        | 164.1 Bu./A |
| P37M81                          | 152.0 Bu./A |

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>H-2581</b> 117 Days RM       |             |
| Clear Meadow Farm Whitehall, MD |             |
| H-2581                          | 208.9 Bu./A |
| DK-642                          | 184.9 Bu./A |
| P3335                           | 188.1 Bu./A |

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>H-2547</b> 112 Day RM        |             |
| Clear Meadow Farm Whitehall, MD |             |
| H-2547                          | 192.6 Bu./A |
| DK591RR                         | 164.4 Bu./A |
| P3335                           | 188.1 Bu./A |

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