

# ONLINE FARM EXPERIENCE

## GRADES 10-12 + ADULT

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

Time: 30 minutes to complete tour and questions.

Additional activities can add 5+ minutes.



Instructions: Visit [www.midwestdairy.com/farm-life/](http://www.midwestdairy.com/farm-life/) for a 10-stop (11-video) tour to help you experience how milk from real cows, on a real Midwestern farm, becomes the fresh, naturally nutrient-rich dairy foods you love.

#### INTRO/WELCOME

**What is a dairy food?**

*Answer: Any food made with milk, such as cheese and yogurt.*

*Note: Foods such as margarine and eggs are not dairy foods.*

**What dairy foods do you eat regularly?**

**What foods are made from milk?**

*Cheese, yogurt, butter, sour cream, cottage cheese, cream cheese, ice cream, whipped cream, etc.*

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*Answer: Cheese, yogurt, butter, sour cream, cottage cheese, cream cheese, ice cream, whipped cream, etc.*

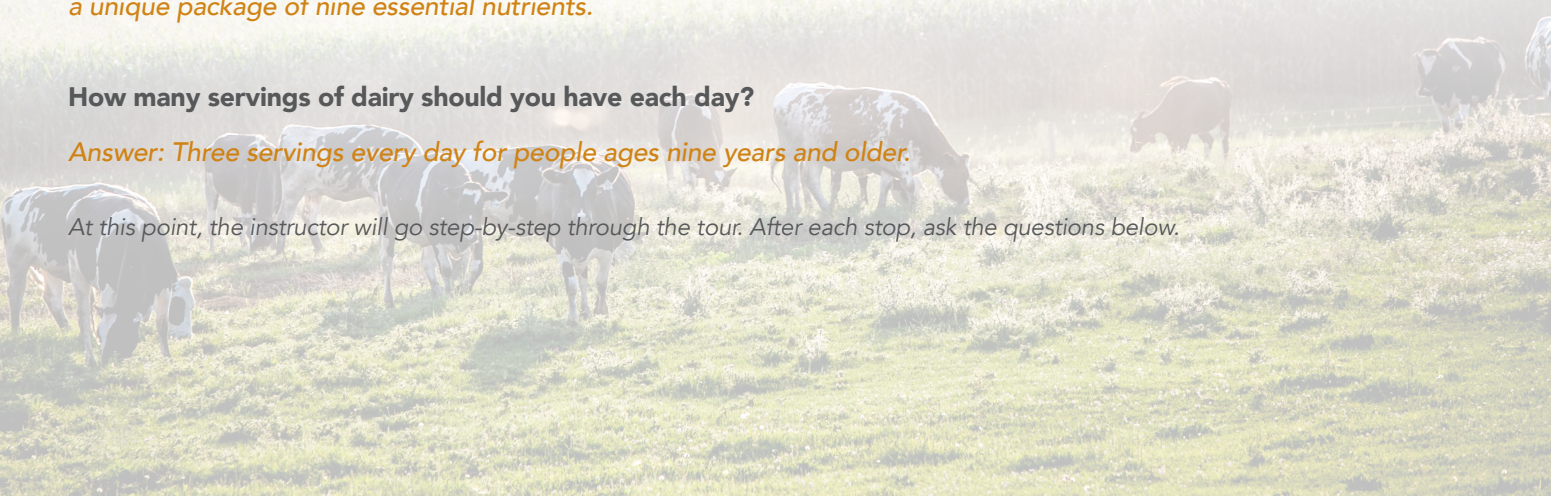
**Why is it important for you to drink milk and eat dairy foods?**

*Answer: Dietary guidelines recommend nutrient-rich foods for a balanced diet. Milk, cheese and yogurt provide a unique package of nine essential nutrients.*

**How many servings of dairy should you have each day?**

*Answer: Three servings every day for people ages nine years and older.*

*At this point, the instructor will go step-by-step through the tour. After each stop, ask the questions below.*





## FAMILY

Have you visited a dairy farm in real-life? If yes, what was your favorite part? If no, what would you expect to see on the farm?

How are dairy farm families like your own family? How are they different?

In addition to knowledge about animals, what business skills do dairy farmers need to have?

*Answer: They need to have skills relating to accounting/finance, employee management, science, food safety, marketing, adapting to new technology (computers/smart phone apps, etc.), environmentalist, repairing equipment and facilities (plumber, electrician).*

## KITCHEN

The cows have animal nutritionists and farmers planning their diet to make sure they get the nutrition they need. How do you get the nutrition you need?

To get enough calcium you need at least three servings of milk each day. What will you pick for your three servings?

Are dairy foods are a good nutrition investment for families? Why or why not?

*Answer: Dollar for dollar, dairy foods are one of the most economical sources of nutrition in the grocery store. At about 25 cents a glass, milk is America's number one food source of calcium, potassium and vitamin D. When families purchase dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt, they're receiving a nutrient package no other food group can offer.*

## VACATION

Cows lay down up to 14 hours a day. What is your favorite way to relax or rest?

Why is it important for cows to take a vacation?

*Answer: The cows have three months of not being milked so they can prepare to give birth to a calf.*

## RECYCLING

What do you think are the biggest challenges regarding sustainability practices facing businesses today?

Why is recycling water important to dairy farmers?

*Answer: Dairy farmers use water responsibly and judiciously. Many conservation technologies are in place so as little water as possible is used. For example, water used to clean the milking parlor is reused to clean feed alleys and then to irrigate fields.*

What three things can you do to practice better environmental stewardship?

*Answer: Recycle, reduce food waste (when grocery shopping, storing and preparing foods), maximize shelf life of dairy foods through correct storage and being creative with leftovers.*

## NURSERY

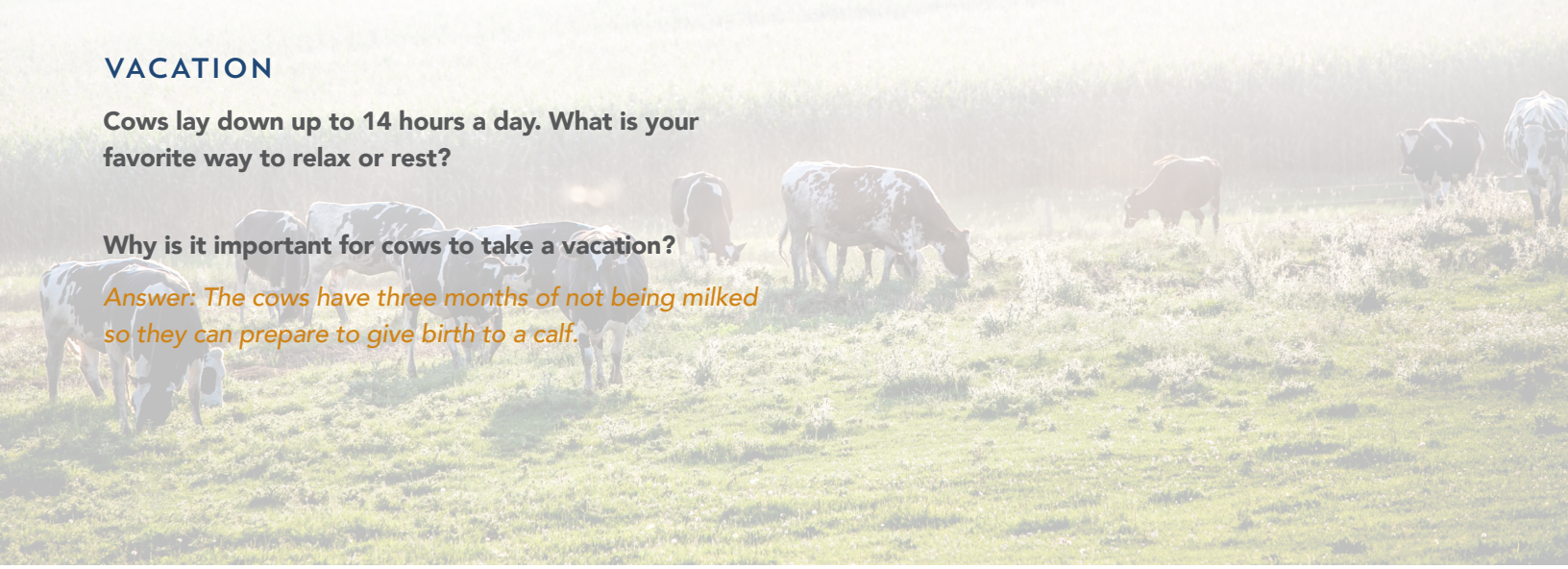
What do the dairy calves do in the nursery?

*Answer: Eat and drink so they can grow up healthy and strong.*

Have you ever bottle-fed a dairy calf?

Why are calves separated from their moms?

*Answer: Separate living quarters shortly after birth protect the health of the calf. Since newborn calves need time to build up their immune systems, it's better that they're not exposed to environmental germs or germs that can be passed on from older animals.*





## DAIRY BREEDS

How many different dairy cow breeds are there in the U.S.?

*Answer: Seven.*

Can you name all the different dairy breeds?

*Answer: Holstein, Jersey, Guernsey, Brown Swiss, Ayrshire, Milking Shorthorn, and Red and White Holstein.*

Why is it important there is more than one breed of dairy cow?

*Answer: Each breed gives slightly different milk that varies with butterfat and protein content. Also, each breed has different traits when it comes to environmental tolerances, genetics, milk production and also farmer preference.*

Do you know the correct terminology for what male and female dairy animals are called?

*Answer: Males are called bulls or a castrated male is called a steer. Females are heifers prior to giving birth and then called cows after they have had a calf.*



Contact Midwest Dairy at [psc@midwestdairy.com](mailto:psc@midwestdairy.com) to receive a free Dairy Breed poster.

## HOME

What is another name for the dairy cows' home?

*Answer: Free stall barn.*

What do the cows do in this area?

*Answer: Eat, drink, socialize, rest and sleep.*

What kind of bedding do the cows sleep on?

*Answer: Sand.*

What practices do dairy farmers have in place to take good care of the cows on their farms?

*Answer: Dairy farmers and the dairy community have created a verifiable animal well-being program called FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management). The FARM program supports farmers with education on animal care and provides the public with added assurance of proper animal care.*

## TRANSPORT

How long does it take for the milk to get to your grocery store?

*Answer: About 48 hours.*

What are the benefits of local foods, such as milk?

*Answer: They are fresh, benefit the local community and help the economy.*





## WORK

**What do the dairy cows do when they go to “work”?**

*Answer: They're milked by machines that gently squeeze the milk from their udders.*

**How many times are the cows milked per day?**

*Answer: Two or three times per day.*

**How much milk does a cow produce each day (in terms of gallons)?**

*Answer: Seven to 10 gallons each day.*

## FRIDGE

**What does homogenize mean and why is it important to dairy?**

*Answer: It's a process that breaks down the fat molecules so they don't separate and rise to the top of the container to form a layer of cream. This process produces a uniform consistency.*

**What does pasteurize mean and why is it important to dairy?**

*Answer: Pasteurization kills harmful bacteria such as E. coli, listeria and salmonella, which can be found in raw milk. All milk intended for consumption is pasteurized so it's safe to drink.*

**What kinds of dairy foods are in your fridge at home?**

**Do you think it's safe to consume dairy after the “sell-by” or “best-by” date? Why or why not?**

*Answer: Yes! Dairy foods should be purchased before the “sell-by” date, but can be safely consumed after it. The “best-by” and “use-by” dates state when to consume products for the best flavor and optimal quality.*

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

*In class:*

**Discuss the questions:**

**“What concerns, if any, do you have about dairy foods?”**

**“What's the biggest misconception about dairy foods?”**

**“How important is it for your dairy foods to be clean and clear?” (Clean = more recognizable ingredients; Clear = Minimal processing, safe, limited environmental impact)**

**Write a paragraph about what components/aspects of milk you look for when making a purchase.**

**Write a paragraph sharing how you would persuade someone to visit a dairy farm.**

*After class:*

**Conduct research and write a report about the misconception of additives to dairy foods, such as hormones and antibiotics.**

**Write a report about what clean and clear dairy foods mean to you. (Clean = more recognizable ingredients; Clear = Minimal processing, safe, limited environmental impact)**

**Research and select a recipe that features milk or your favorite dairy food. Write it down and share with the class.**

**Split the class into small teams and have them compile a report with details about nutrition, care and necessary conditions for healthy dairy cows.**

**Research potential career options available in the dairy industry. Then write a report about your favorite and why that career is of interest to you.**

