

# U.S. dairy 2010 statistics

Fewer cows, but more production per head, add up to another record year for total milk output.

by Hoard's Dairyman staff

**T**HE sharpest increase in production per cow in five years more than offset another small decline in cow numbers, pushing total U.S. milk production to a new all-time record in 2010, according to statistics released by USDA. Average herd size edged higher, and dairy farm numbers declined by the smallest amount since reliable figures became available in 1992.

Only one of those statistics comes as much of a surprise: the small decline in dairy numbers. With billions of dollars of total industry equity wiped out during the financial meltdown of 2009, many dairies found themselves in precarious borrowing positions with banks, which had also been battered themselves. Milk prices strengthened significantly in 2010 from catastrophic levels seen the year before, but extensive forced liquidation of herds, especially in the West, were widely expected even before beef prices soared to jaw-dropping levels late in the year.

The West, despite a dip in total cow numbers for the second year in a row, saw a sharp rebound in total milk production. The region's growth in average herd size was modest, however, even as the influx of heifers born as a result of sexed semen use three years earlier began arriving in the fall.

## Dairy Farm Numbers

The total number of licensed dairies in the U.S. during 2010 dropped to 53,127, a decline of 1,815 or 3.3 percent. Both figures are the smallest declines since licensed dairy numbers became available in 1992, and was only slightly more than the 2008 decline of 2,008 dairies.

Although the three smallest declines in U.S. herd numbers have occurred the last three years, anything else would be cause for panic due to how few dairies are left in the industry. Fortunately, the rate of decline in dairy numbers seems to be stabilizing in the 3.5 percent per year range.

Just like in 2009, the West was hit especially hard in 2010. Dairy numbers fell by 427 (6.9 percent). The Midwest (-980 or 3.3 percent) lost more dairies, but is five times bigger than the West. The Northeast actually increased its share of the national dairy farm population by losing only 245 herds or 1.6 percent.

## Total Cow Numbers

The average number of dairy cows in the U.S. during 2010 was 9.117 million head, a decline of 86,000 head that follows a 112,000-head dip in



2009. After declining steadily throughout the 1990s, U.S. cow numbers have remained more or less static so far in the 21st century and are nearly identical to what they were in 2001.

Thirteen states increased cow numbers, 29 declined, and eight were unchanged. Excluding Alaska and Hawaii, the largest percentage increases occurred in Wyoming (+9.1 percent), Washington (+4.6 percent), Georgia (+4.0 percent), and Oregon (+3.5 percent). Three states had declines of 10 percent or more.

States with the largest increases in actual cow numbers – by a wide margin – were Idaho (+14,000) and Washington (+11,000). Just as it did in 2009, California led the nation in the loss column by a large margin, as total cow numbers dropped by 42,000. In just two years, total cow numbers in the Golden State are down 90,000 head. Utah, by comparison, has just 85,000 cows.

There were no changes in the Top 10 States list of most cows in 2010.

## Production Per Cow

Average production per cow in the U.S. in 2010 was a record 21,149 pounds, a strong increase of 576 pounds that was the largest since 2005. By comparison, average production gains since 2000 had averaged just 280 pounds per year and a small decline even occurred in 2001.

Average production per cow rose in 37 states and fell in 13. Excluding very small states whose total cow populations are smaller than some Western herds, the largest increases were in North Dakota (+1,547 pounds), Wyoming (+1,031 pounds), and California (+1,025 pounds). The largest declines were in South Carolina (-1,125 pounds) and Mississippi (-771 pounds).

New Mexico, which in 2009 became the first state to average over 24,000 pounds per cow, repeated that feat in 2010 and continued as the No.1 ranked state for productivity. Colorado, Washington, and Arizona were tightly bunched in 2nd through 4th place. Michigan and Cali-

fornia were the only other states above 23,000 pounds. At the bottom of the list, eight different states averaged less than 15,000 pounds per cow, and two were less than 12,000.

On a regional basis, changes in production per cow varied greatly. Output in the West increased more than the national average. Gains in the Northeast and Midwest were lower, but solid. Production gain in the Southeast was significantly lower.

The West was once again the only region whose average production per cow was above the national average, as production per cow exceeded

22,000 pounds for the first time. All three other regions were below the national average.

## Total Milk Production

Total U.S. milk production in 2010 was 192.82 billion pounds, a strong increase of 3.49 billion pounds from 2009. Even so, 2010 was far from extraordinary; from 2005 to 2008 total output increased at least 3.87 billion pounds per year.

Total production increased in 22 states and declined in 28. The largest percentage gains were in Hawaii (+18.8 percent), Alaska (+18.3 percent), and Wyoming (+14.3 percent). The largest declines were in Louisiana (-13.9 percent), New Jersey (-13.0 percent), Delaware (-11.8 percent), and South Carolina (-11.5 percent). The largest volume gains were in California (+873 million pounds), Wisconsin (+796 million pounds), and Idaho (+629 million pounds). The largest decline was in Missouri (-123 million pounds).

After several years of relentless gains, Idaho passed New York in 2010 to take over as the No. 3 state in the U.S. for total milk production.


## Western Trends in 2010

**Cows** – Cow numbers fell 38,000 head in the West and 48,000 head in the rest of the U.S.

**Milk per cow** – Average production per cow in the West was 22,601 pounds. Production per cow in the rest of the U.S. was 19,912 pounds.

**Total milk** – Total production in the West increased by 2.006 billion pounds, most of it in California and Idaho. Production in the rest of the U.S. increased by 1.479 billion pounds.

**Cows per herd** – Average herd size in the West was 724 cows, an increase of 28 head. Average herd size in the rest of the U.S. was 104, an increase of two head.

**Average milk production per dairy** – Average total milk production for the year in the West was 16.36 million pounds per dairy. Average total production per dairy in the rest of the U.S. was 2.07 million pounds. 

## Top 10 dairy states in 2010:

	total milk production		total cows		production per cow	
No.1	California	40.39 billion lbs.	California	1,754,000	New Mexico	24,551 lbs.
No.2	Wisconsin	26.04 billion lbs.	Wisconsin	1,262,000	Colorado	23,664 lbs.
No.3	Idaho	12.78 billion lbs.	New York	611,000	Washington	23,510 lbs.
No.4	New York	12.71 billion lbs.	Idaho	564,000	Arizona	23,441 lbs.
No.5	Pennsylvania	10.73 billion lbs.	Pennsylvania	541,000	Michigan	22,260 lbs.
No.6	Minnesota	9.10 billion lbs.	Minnesota	470,000	California	22,025 lbs.
No.7	Texas	8.83 billion lbs.	Texas	413,000	Idaho	22,658 lbs.
No.8	Michigan	8.33 billion lbs.	Michigan	358,000	Nevada	22,143 lbs.
No.9	New Mexico	7.88 billion lbs.	New Mexico	321,000	Utah	21,400 lbs.
No.10	Washington	5.90 billion lbs.	Ohio	271,000	Texas	21,375 lbs.

# U.S. Dairy Industry Statistics, 2005-10

## total milk production (millions of pounds)

## total cows (thousands of head)

## average milk production per cow

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	1-year change	5-year change	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	1-year change	5-year change	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	1-year change	5-year change	number of dairies	cows/herd	lbs. of milk dairy/year	
<b>Total U.S.</b>	<b>176,929</b>	<b>181,796</b>	<b>185,664</b>	<b>189,982</b>	<b>189,334</b>	<b>192,819</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>9,043</b>	<b>9,112</b>	<b>9,189</b>	<b>9,315</b>	<b>9,203</b>	<b>9,117</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>19,565</b>	<b>19,951</b>	<b>20,024</b>	<b>20,395</b>	<b>20,573</b>	<b>21,149</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>53,127</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>3,629,330</b>	
<b>West</b>																												
Alaska	13.5	9.8	8.8	7.2	6.0	7.1	18.3%	-47.4%	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.0%	-45.5%	12,273	12,250	14,667	12,000	10,000	11,833	1,833	-440	5	120	1,419,960	
Arizona	3,742	3,954	4,210	4,349	4,076	4,149	1.8%	10.9%	165	173	181	186	177	177	0.0%	7.3%	22,679	22,855	23,260	23,382	23,028	23,441	413	762	110	1,609	37,718,700	
California	37,564	38,830	40,683	41,203	39,512	40,385	2.2%	7.5%	1,755	1,780	1,813	1,844	1,796	1,754	-2.3%	-0.1%	21,404	21,815	22,440	22,344	22,000	23,025	1,025	1,621	1,710	1,026	23,617,456	
Colorado	2,348	2,547	2,706	2,935	2,839	2,816	-0.8%	19.9%	104	110	118	128	123	119	-3.3%	14.4%	22,577	23,155	22,932	22,930	23,081	23,664	583	1,087	130	915	21,661,682	
Hawaii	70	57	35.5	18.5	21.3	25.3	18.8%	-63.6%	5.4	4.3	2.9	1.7	1.5	1.9	26.7%	-64.8%	12,889	13,256	12,241	10,882	14,200	13,316	-884	427	2	950	12,650,200	
Idaho	10,161	10,905	11,549	12,315	12,150	12,779	5.2%	25.8%	455	488	513	549	550	564	2.5%	24.0%	22,332	22,346	22,513	22,432	22,091	22,658	567	326	585	964	21,844,636	
Kansas	2,276	2,345	2,187	2,415	2,488	2,499	0.4%	9.8%	111	112	110	117	118	119	0.8%	7.2%	20,505	20,938	19,882	20,641	21,085	21,000	-85	495	390	305	6,407,692	
Montana	372	354	333	313	299	289	-3.3%	-22.3%	19	19	18	17	15	14	-6.7%	-26.3%	19,579	18,632	18,500	18,412	19,933	20,643	710	1,064	70	200	4,128,600	
Nebraska	1,077	1,118	1,075	1,083	1,200	1,168	-2.7%	8.4%	60	61	59	58	61	59	-3.3%	-1.7%	17,950	18,328	18,220	18,672	19,672	19,797	125	1,847	260	227	4,492,396	
Nevada	542	544	553	559	611	620	1.5%	14.4%	25	27	27	27	28	28	0.0%	12.0%	21,680	20,148	20,481	20,704	21,821	22,143	322	463	25	1,120	24,800,160	
New Mexico	6,951	7,630	7,290	7,865	7,904	7,881	-0.3%	13.4%	328	355	332	338	325	321	-1.2%	-2.1%	21,192	21,493	21,958	23,269	24,320	24,551	231	3,359	140	2,293	56,291,936	
North Dakota	468	470	444	418	385	384	-0.3%	-17.9%	33	32	29	26	23	21	-8.7%	-36.4%	14,182	14,688	15,310	16,077	16,739	18,286	1,547	4,104	170	124	2,258,859	
Oklahoma	1,236	1,214	1,144	1,061	1,002	959	-4.3%	-22.4%	75	73	69	64	59	56	-5.1%	-25.3%	16,480	16,630	16,580	16,578	16,983	17,125	142	645	250	224	3,836,000	
Oregon	2,284	2,242	2,233	2,254	2,248	2,399	6.7%	5.0%	121	118	115	114	114	118	3.5%	-2.5%	18,876	19,000	19,417	19,772	19,719	20,331	612	1,455	270	437	8,885,400	
South Dakota	1,437	1,505	1,641	1,796	1,892	1,884	-0.4%	31.1%	81	81	85	90	94	92	-2.1%	13.6%	17,741	18,580	19,306	19,956	20,128	20,478	350	2,737	375	245	5,023,936	
Texas	6,442	7,145	7,384	8,416	8,840	8,828	-0.1%	37.0%	320	335	389	418	423	413	-2.4%	29.1%	20,131	21,328	18,982	20,134	20,898	21,375	477	1,244	590	700	14,962,500	
Utah	1,661	1,747	1,732	1,776	1,767	1,819	2.9%	9.5%	88	86	85	85	84	85	1.2%	-3.4%	18,875	20,314	20,376	20,894	21,036	21,400	364	2,525	240	354	7,579,167	
Washington	5,608	5,464	5,531	5,696	5,561	5,901	6.1%	5.2%	241	237	238	244	240	251	4.6%	4.1%	23,270	23,055	23,239	23,344	23,171	23,510	339	240	460	546	12,828,283	
Wyoming	73	118	134	136	105	120	14.3%	64.6%	4.9	6.7	7.1	7.0	5.5	6.0	9.1%	22.4%	14,878	17,612	18,831	19,386	19,036	20,067	1,031	5,189	20	300	6,020,100	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84,325</b>	<b>88,199</b>	<b>90,873</b>	<b>94,615</b>	<b>92,906</b>	<b>94,912</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>3,992</b>	<b>4,099</b>	<b>4,192</b>	<b>4,314</b>	<b>4,238</b>	<b>4,200</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>21,121</b>	<b>21,518</b>	<b>21,680</b>	<b>21,931</b>	<b>21,924</b>	<b>22,601</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>1,480</b>	<b>5,802</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>16,358,566</b>	
<i>U.S. share</i>	<i>47.66%</i>	<i>48.52%</i>	<i>48.94%</i>	<i>49.80%</i>	<i>49.07%</i>	<i>49.22%</i>			<i>44.15%</i>	<i>44.98%</i>	<i>45.62%</i>	<i>46.32%</i>	<i>46.05%</i>	<i>46.06%</i>														<i>10.9%</i>

## Midwest

Illinois	1,958	1,983	1,917	1,894	1,925	1,917	-0.4%	-2.1%	104	103	103	102	102	100	-2.0%	-3.8%	18,827	19,252	18,612	18,569	18,873	19,170	297	343	860	116	2,229,070	
Indiana	3,166	3,277	3,371	3,287	3,383	3,434	1.5%	8.5%	156	165	166	167	168	169	0.6%	8.3%	20,295	19,861	20,307	19,682	20,137	20,320	183	25	1,660	102	2,068,723	
Iowa	4,025	4,126	4,278	4,319	4,379	4,337	-1.0%	7.8%	195	205	213	216	215	209	-2.8%	7.2%	20,641	20,127	20,085	19,995	20,367	20,751	384	110	1,790	117	2,422,882	
Michigan	6,750	7,115	7,625	7,763	7,968	8,327	4.5%	23.4%	312	320	335	350	355	358	0.8%	14.7%	21,635	22,234	22,761	22,180	22,445	23,260	815	1,625	2,230	161	3,734,117	
Minnesota	8,195	8,370	8,656	8,782	9,019	9,102	0.9%	11.1%	453	450	460	464	469	470	0.2%	3.8%	18,091	18,600	18,817	18,927	19,230	19,336	106	1,245	4,540	104	2,001,744	
Missouri	1,875	1,840	1,678	1,615	1,568	1,445	-7.8%	-22.9%	117	115	112	110	107	99	-7.5%	-15.4%	16,026	16,000	14,982	14,682	14,654	14,596	-58	-1,430	1,630	61	886,506	
Ohio	4,743	4,860	4,980	5,130	5,192	5,270	1.5%	11.1%	270	274	275	280	277	271	-2.2%	0.4%	17,567	17,737	18,109	18,321	18,744	19,446	702	1,879	3,250	83	1,621,497	
Wisconsin	22,866	23,398	24,080	24,472	25,239	26,035	3.2%	13.9%	1,236	1,243	1,247	1,252	1,257	1,262	0.4%	2.1%	18,500	18,824	19,310	19,546	20,079	20,630	551	2,130	12,710	99	2,048,392	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53,578</b>	<b>54,969</b>	<b>56,585</b>	<b>57,262</b>	<b>58,673</b>	<b>59,867</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>2,843</b>	<b>2,875</b>	<b>2,911</b>	<b>2,941</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>2,938</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>18,846</b>	<b>19,120</b>	<b>19,438</b>	<b>19,470</b>	<b>19,889</b>	<b>20,377</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>1,531</b>	<b>28,670</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>2,088,141</b>	
<i>U.S. share</i>	<i>30.28%</i>	<i>30.24%</i>	<i>30.48%</i>	<i>30.14%</i>	<i>30.99%</i>	<i>31.05%</i>			<i>31.44%</i>	<i>31.55%</i>	<i>31.68%</i>	<i>31.57%</i>	<i>32.05%</i>	<i>32.23%</i>														<i>54.0%</i>

## Northeast

Connecticut	384	367	365	364	353	356	0.8%	-7.3%	20	19	19	19	19	19	0.0%	-5.0%	19,200	19,316	19,211	19,158	18,579	19,263	684	63	140	136	2,614,264
Delaware	131	114	113	110	102	90	-11.8%	-31.1%	7.4	7.0	6.8	6.5	6.0	5.3	-11.7%	-28.4%	17,662	16,286	16,618	16,923	17,000	16,981	-19	-681	50	106	1,799,986
Maine	595	574	587	603	596	587	-1.5%	-1.3%	33	32	33	33	33	32	-3.0%	-3.0%	18,030	17,938	17,788	18,273	18,061	18,344	283	314	310	103	1,893,574
Maryland	1,135	1,106	1,051	1,029	1,004	1,001	-0.3%	-11.8%	71	64	58	56	55	54	-1.8%	-23.9%	15,986	17,281	18,121	18,375	18,255	18,537	282	2,551	530	102	1,888,675
Massachusetts	290	278	255	254	246	244	-0.8%	-15.9%	17	16	15	15	14	14	0.0%	-17.6%	17,059	17,375	17,000	16,933	17,571	17,429	-142	370	170	82	1,435,329
New Hampshire	302	293	290	299	293	298	1.7%	-1.3%	16	15	15	15	15	15	0.0%	-6.3%	18,875	19,533	19,333	19,933	19,533	19,867	334	992	130	115	2,292,346
New Jersey	192	178	168	169	161	140	-13.0%	-27.																			