

TeamNEO
Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County
Geauga Growth Partnership
Portage Development Board
Youngstown-Warren Chamber of Commerce
OSU Extension

February 19, 2013

Dear Northeast Ohio Dairy Farmer:

Milk and cheese production have long been major agricultural businesses in northeast Ohio. As you well know, there has been great contraction in the number of dairy farms in the region. Looking ahead, there are many difficult issues facing continued and expanded milk production. These include generational transition, federal milk pricing, input costs, workforce, waste management, and state regulations.

In an effort to understand better how these issues are playing out in northeast Ohio, we are asking you to complete and return the enclosed survey either by mail in the return envelope or by scanning and returning via email to info@geaugagrowth.com. With the results, our organizations will know what actions we can take collectively to help maintain and hopefully increase regional milk production. We are sending the survey to dairy farms in Ashtabula, Geauga, Portage, and Trumbull Counties.

We hope that we can have your cooperation in gathering the information we need. If you have any questions, please contact David Marrison at marrison.2@osu.edu, or 440-576-9008. As many of you know, David is the dairy contact at OSU Extension in our region.

We would appreciate it if you could **return the survey no later than Friday, March 8.**

Thanks for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Waltermire, President, TeamNEO
Brian Anderson, Growth Partnership of Ashtabula County
Frank Samuel, Geauga Growth Partnership
Brad Ehrhart, Portage Development Board
William Cann, Youngstown-Warren Chamber of Commerce
David Marrison, OSU Extension

2013 Northeast Ohio Dairy Farm Survey



Please answer the following questions to help us understand the issues affecting maintaining and increasing milk production in northeast Ohio. You may complete the survey and return it by mail in the enclosed envelope or by scanning and then emailing to info@geaugagrowth.com. Thank you for your assistance.

We would appreciate the following personal information, so that we may contact you with the results of the survey and with any action plans that result. Please note that individual survey results will not be shared with others; only collective results (by region and state) will be published. If you prefer not to provide some or all of the following identifying information, we respect that choice.

We thank you for taking time to complete this survey!

Name _____
Farm name _____
Number of years in business _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Please provide answers to all of the following questions. Thank you.

A. Farm Information

1. Total tillable farm acreage: _____
2. Number of lactating dairy cows (including dry cows and first calf heifers): _____
3. Maximum size of your dairy during the past ten years : Number of cows _____ Year _____
4. What is the average amount of milk produced per cow per day: _____

5. Workforce

(indicate number of workers in each category—a worker may appear in more than one category):

Family total: _____
Full-time _____ Permanent _____
Part-time _____ Temporary _____

Non-family total: _____
Full-time _____ Permanent _____
Part-time _____ Temporary _____
Local _____ Migrant/immigrant _____

6. Do you sell your milk (check one): ___ as an independent ___ as a cooperative member.

B. Five-year Outlook

Looking ahead five years, what are the plans for your dairy operation?

1. If you plan to **discontinue** milking cows, please check the three principal reasons:

- Retirement, with no one to take over
- Retirement, someone else taking over
- Better opportunities for off-farm employment
- Developer will buy land
- Shift to other livestock, cash crops, or other agriculture
- Want more time for family and other interests
- Can't make it financially
- Other (please specify) _____

2. If you plan to **continue** milking cows, what are the major objectives you must reach?

- Modernize facilities to meet profit or family goals
- Grow the size of my herd in order to meet profit goals
- Change my style of dairying to meet profit goals (through, e.g. grazing, robotics or free stall parlors)
- Other, please specify _____

3. Do you intend to expand your dairy operations during the next 5 years?

- Yes, by adding _____ number of cows
- Yes, by adding another location(s), with _____ cows
- No, because _____

4. If you would like to expand your dairy operation, what are the three major factors limiting expansion, in addition to milk prices and input costs such as feed and fuel: (Please check all that apply.)

- Weather
- Land available to grow crops
- Land available for manure disposal
- Inadequate or unavailable labor
- Local, State and/or Federal Regulations
- Access to financing
- Taxes
- Infrastructure
- Commercial or residential development in my area
- Community reaction, including zoning or permitting obstacles
- Declining community support generally for dairy operations
- Other (please specify) _____

5. Which of the following **facility** improvements do you plan to invest in over the next five years:

- Cow comfort
- Housing for milk cows
- Housing for calves
- Housing for heifers
- Housing for dry cows
- Feed handling systems, including storage
- Milking systems or facility, e.g. robots
- Manure handling systems, including storage
- Renewable energy or energy conservation
- Other (please specify) _____

6. Which of the following **management** improvements do you expect to make over the next five years:

- Feed management
- Genetic improvements
- Calf and heifer health management
- Milking herd health management
- Environmental improvement or conservation practices
- Financial management
- Transition cow management
- Other (please specify) _____

C. General Issues

1. Please rate the importance of each of the following factors for your dairy operations:

1 = Very Important 2 = Somewhat Important 3 = Not important

- Dairy equipment and service
- Availability of financing
- Labor
- Veterinarians
- Feed providers
- Outside advisors (nutritional, genetics, financial, Extension, legal/regulatory)
- Land availability
- Local community acceptance/support
- Milk market risks
- Farm equipment and service
- Other (please specify) _____

2. Please give us your comments on the following topics. And thanks again for your help!

My greatest success in dairy farming:

My greatest concern about the future of dairy farming in northeast Ohio:

My advice to organizations trying to maintain or increase regional milk production:

This survey is being conducted by
TeamNEO, Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County, Geauga Growth Partnership,
Portage Development Board, Youngstown-Warren Chamber of Commerce, and OSU Extension.



Thank you for participating in the survey.
Please mail your responses in the enclosed envelope to the Geauga Growth Partnership office or
you may scan and email your completed survey to info@geaugagrowth.com.