


Results of the 2015 MDPB Dairy Farmer Survey

MA Dairy Promotion Board
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Topics to be covered

1. Survey
2. Results
3. Next Steps

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Survey

1. 35 questions
2. Basic farms stats, local economy, other local benefits, agriculture heritage, farm stewardship, and effectiveness of state and federal programs.
3. Sent to 100 MA dairy farms with follow up reminders and phone calls (37 mailed, 63 mailed)
4. 46 respondents (3 were blank)

∴ Statistically valid

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Was the survey representative of MA Dairy farms?

1. Survey farm herd sizes similar to 2012 Census of Agriculture
2. Regional distribution (E, C, W) of survey farms matched the distribution of MDPB mailing list
3. Survey farm milk sales (\$\$) similar to 2012 Census of Agriculture


∴ Statistically was representative of MA dairy farms

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Results

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Local Economy

1. Average local tax contribution: ~\$15,100
2. Present in almost 1/3rd of MA municipalities.
3. Average wage exceeded MA living wage
4. An estimated 1,800 people employed
5. Over 2/3^{ds} of dairy farm expenditures were made in MA

∴ Economic benefits to local economies has increased in last 5 years.

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Benefits to Communities

1. 44% of farms conduct direct sales of local food products
2. 91% allow some public access to farm
3. 82% apply good neighbor practices to support good neighbor relations
4. 64% volunteer in the community

∴ Other benefits to local communities was high, has increased over last 5 years, and exceeded national averages

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Agriculture Heritage & Conservation

1. 91% use practices that increase scenic appeal of farm
2. 81% of farms have successional plans (an increase)
3. 97% of farms participate in farmland conservation programs

∴ Heritage stewardship was high, stable in last 5 years, and exceeded national averages

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Farm Stewardship

1. 90% of farmers used BMPs to water quality
2. 80% of farmers used BMPs to protect soil health
3. 70% of farmers managed at least some of their land for wildlife
4. Farmers manage 35% of their lands for wildlife
5. Acres managed for wildlife increased from 11,500 acres in 2010 to 17,700 acres in 2015

∴ Environmental stewardship has increased in last 5 years and exceeded national averages

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MA Dairy Promotion Board satisfaction

1. 67% satisfied or very satisfied with the level of communication from the MDPB to dairy farmers
2. 67% satisfied or very satisfied with the efforts of MDPB to promote MA dairy products to consumers
3. Phone calls: dissatisfaction about raw milk promotion and not enough focus on selling milk

∴ Satisfaction was high but some variation

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MA Dairy Farmer Tax Credit

1. 97%: MA Dairy Farmer Tax Credit important for economic viability of dairy farms
2. 51% used their tax credit to pay operating costs.
3. Decline in dairy farm numbers fell after MDFTC
 - -5.3% from 2003-2008
 - -2.5% from 2009-2015
4. Decline not statistically significant
5. CT and MA saw smallest recent dairy declines in region

∴ The MA Dairy Farmer Tax Credit was important to dairy farm economic viability

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Other State & Federal Dairy Assistance Programs

1. 90% enrolled in ≥ 1 of 21 state and federal assistance programs
2. MA Taxation Law and the MA Farm Energy Program rated as important to economic viability
3. Other programs had lower enrollment but were rated highly

∴ Other state and federal assistance programs play an important role in supporting farm viability

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