

Learning Sources



PROJECT Agriculture
Project-Based Learning and
Teaching Series



More Than Just Farming

What are the agriculture jobs of the future?



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Modern Farmers

Did you know that farmers are getting older? The average age of farmers in 2016 was 55. However, the number of women farmers and farmers who are under the age of 35 increased for the first time since 1991.

On some farms, younger people are working with older farmers. These **multi-generation partnerships** may occur on family farms as well as in large farms that have been formed by combining smaller family farms.

Some people are worried that the family farm is disappearing in Alberta. They think we will lose an important way of life if fewer young people decide to stay in the family business of farming.



Families that Farm Together



A “family” farm means that the farm is the centre of the family’s life. On a family farm, every member of the family has important responsibilities.



School's Out for Summer



Farming practices have influenced our school system. In the past, many families depended on all family members to plant and harvest crops. School was scheduled to allow for time for children to help with planting and harvesting. That's why many schools still have a long summer break.

City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-1197

Young people who have many choices for work and education might not want to continue working on the family farm. It is difficult for young people to get into farming if they don't have a family member who is willing to pass along the land, the equipment and the experience that is needed to become a successful farmer.

What do you think the future of family farms will be? Why do you think this?

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The Need for Technology

The cost of buying the land and equipment needed to run a dairy farm can be a challenge for smaller farms. The computerized robotics that automatically milk cows can cost close to \$300 000 for each machine. One machine can usually milk about 60 cows each day.

This technology can make one farmer more efficient. Machines can read an electronic tag on the cow to identify it, record how much milk the cow normally produces and check for problems with milk.

Robotic milking machines can help a smaller farm milk more cows and produce more milk. It is easier to run a family farm with this technology.



A Day in the Life of a Robot Milking Machine



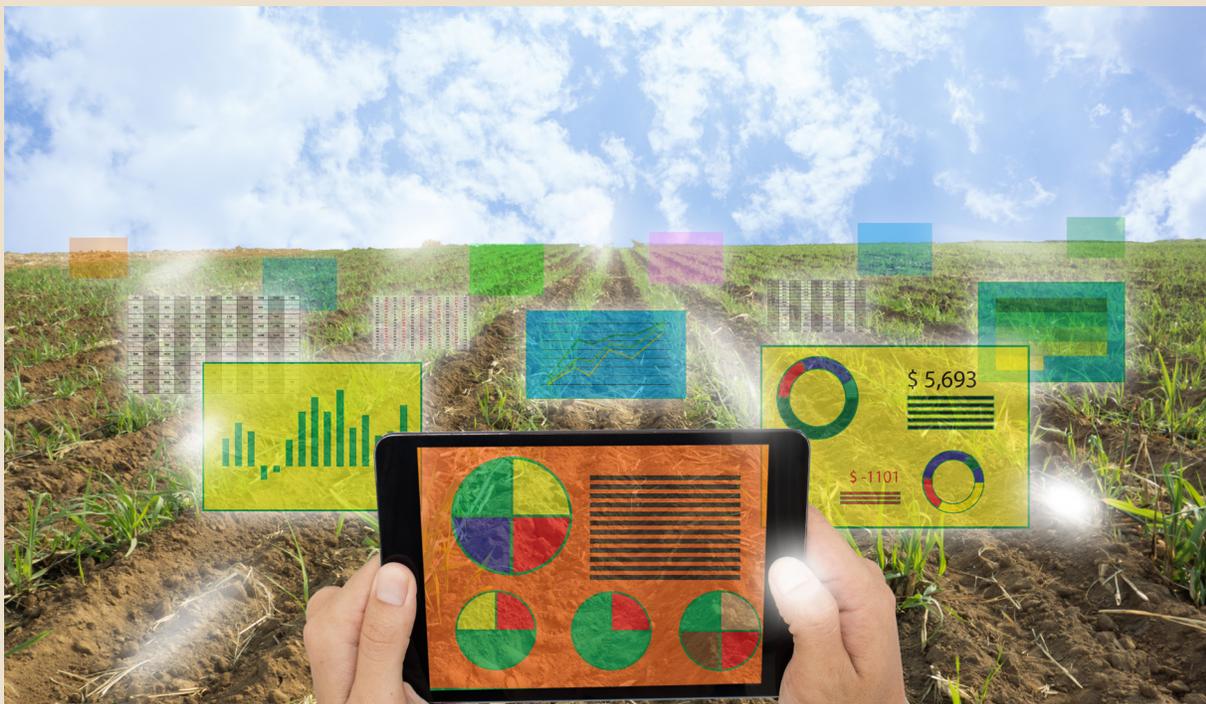
A robot milking machine has a very long day! It runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Cows are free to get milked as many times as they want. Some cows want to release their milk twice a day, and others will go for milking up to four times a day. The cows are attracted to the robot with healthy feed and grains. They learn to walk through a gate to hook up to the robotic milking machine. Many cows come for milking at the same times each day! The photo shows automated milking machinery.

Other types of technology can also make it easier for a farmer.

- The internet provides news, market process and information.
- Smartphones can be used to map and pinpoint GPS areas on a field that need nutrients or have a pest problem.
- Video cameras that are linked to smartphones can be used to check on calves and cows.
- Robotic milking machines can also be controlled by a smartphone.



There's an App For That



"The use of smartphones is increasing and along with it is the need for applications. Some companies are hiring people to design applications for their products. For example, someone working for a seed company may develop an application that lets farmers plug in their personal information to receive recommendations on which seeds to purchase for their farms. Robotic, GPS and soil probe companies each employ many different people for their work. Jobs exist to design the technology, sell and market to farmers, install the machines and maintain and service them."

Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. (2014). *All About Food: Exploring Canada's Food System*: p. 15. <http://allaboutfood.aifc.ca/uploads/resources/files/AAF-2016%20ENG-LR.pdf>



Farm Drones



Some types of technology help keep track of the weather. Other technologies are used to help with practices like making sure crops are planted in straight rows and that animals are fed and watered properly. Drones are used to watch over crops and animals.

Why do you think farmers look for and use new or better technology?

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An Increasing Demand for Food

It is estimated that world food demand will double by 2050. Technology has helped increase the amount of food that one farmer can produce. A farmer in 1900 produced enough food for 10 people. Today's farmer feeds over 120 people.



Food Production



Food production means the process of taking raw ingredients, such as grains or milk, and changing them into food items like bread or yogurt.

Do you think the growing demand for more food could result in the invention of new technology? Why do you think this?



Farming Experiences

Farming is similar in many ways to what it was like over a hundred years ago. Farmers still grow crops and raise animals. They pay attention to the weather and depend on natural resources. Farming families still work together to run their farms.

Farming has also gone through many changes. **Inventions**, which are new and unique processes or items, have caused some of these changes.

In dairy farming, the invention of milking machines and different ways of transporting milk, including with large insulated tanks, affected the amount of milk that a farmer produced.

The invention of pipelines allowed farmers to connect milking machines directly to holding tanks. This led to the ability to farm with larger herds of cows.



Hauling Milk



Some farmers depend more and more on technology to make a living on their farms. Some focus on the use of sustainable, organic practices that allow them to work directly with the land.



Farm School



Tsawwassen Farm School is an educational program that is a collaboration between Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Tsawwassen First Nation. It is provided on Tsawwassen First Nation land. The program combines sustainable agriculture with traditional indigenous foods.

This program teaches young people about small-scale agriculture. The farm has a traditional medicine garden, a mixed fruit orchard, a market garden and farm animals, including chickens and pigs. **Market farms** grow fruit, vegetable and grain crops that they usually sell directly to people. Students learn farming practices that do not depend on expensive technology.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University. *Tsawwassen Farm School Program.* www.kpu.ca/tfnfarm

How do you think organic and low tech farming can support food needs of a growing world population? Why do you think this?



Dairy Farming A "Great Way of Life"

Life on a dairy farm in Alberta means long days filled with hard work, but Adrian Haeni loves both the challenges and the rewards. "I can't imagine doing anything else," says Haeni. "I love watching things grow. That's the beauty of farming." Haeni, his wife Vreni and their four boys live and work together on a large farm, one hour north of Calgary. They have Jersey cattle, and also grow barley and hay. In addition, they breed Canadian horses, some of which are now being used by the Calgary Police Service.

For the Haeni's four sons – Michael, 16, Sam, 14, Jonas, 12 and Nils, 10 – doing their daily chores on the farm has taught them many skills and life lessons. From helping with the milking, cleaning out pens, bedding the cattle [preparing rest areas that are packed with straw or other bedding material] and doing work in the fields, every member of the family plays an important role.



"The boys are learning a lot about responsibility," says their father. "We're very proud of them. They are very involved in the whole operation of our farm." All four boys take part in the local 4-H club, which is a program for young people that focuses on science and agriculture.

A typical day for Adrian and Vreni Haeni starts at 5:30 a.m., when they head down to the barn. After school and supper, the boys pitch in and help, and the day's work typically ends around 8 p.m. "It takes a lot of work for us farmers to make sure we are keeping up to all the regulations [rules for animal care and milk production]," says Haeni, "but I'm glad because it benefits all of us."

"It would be wonderful if more children could have the chance to learn what farming is all about. It's a great way of life."

Adapted with permission from *Calgary Stampede Aggie Days*. *Calgary Herald: A special information supplement*, 2010: p. 9.



Farming in the Peace Country Has Its Challenges

When Phillippe and Emma Lavoie came to the Peace country from a small town in Quebec in 1953 with their nine children and seven Holsteins, they couldn't know the legacy [traditions handed down from one period of time to another] they had started to build.

The couple had worked in the dairy industry back east and settled near the hamlet [small village] of St. Isidore in northwestern Alberta. Son Richard Lavoie said the family had been drawn west by an organization promoting agricultural opportunities."

The family's dairy and grain operation expanded too and by 1994, the family was seriously considering construction of a new dairy complex. "The existing site had capacity for only 200 cows per day," recalls Lavoie. "We had reached capacity."



A year later, a new milking barn, seven kilometres from the original site, was underway. The new facility, with capacity for 500 cows a day, was completed by late 1995. "We did our first milking in the new facility in November, and were up to 250 cows per day that year," Lavoie says.

In 1999, the combination dairy and grain operation was separated, and the dairy operation is now known as Entreprises Lavoie 1999.

"A successful dairy producer has to maintain new technologies, such as computerized operations that include software programs to manage the herd," he says.

One of the challenges that dairy producers have is their distance to a market, a place where goods and services are bought and sold. "Our operation isn't close to the main area of Alberta dairy producers," says Lavoie. "We do a lot of marketing, or selling, of cows so if we were closer to market things would be a bit easier. But that's the way it is and we manage just fine."

On the positive side, the cost of land is an advantage in the Peace. But with the absence of irrigation systems in southern Alberta, Peace producers are much more weather dependent. "It's more of a challenge here when it's a dry year," Lavoie says. Entreprises Lavoie operates on a section of land and buys most of its feed. It works closely with the Lavoie grain company run by his brother

Adapted with permission from Rebecca Dika, *Dairy Farming in the Peace Country Has Its Challenges*, September 13, 2010. [AGCanada.com](http://www.agcanada.com/Article.aspx?ID=25850) website at www.agcanada.com/Article.aspx?ID=25850.



Dairy Farming is a Cool Job

Jeff Nonay from Lakeside Dairy is a third-generation farmer near Edmonton. He sat down with Ryan Jespersen from 630 CHED for a segment called *Really Cool Jobs*. Find this interview at www.lakesidedairy.com/sites/default/files/jn.mp3.

“The coolest thing about my job, and farming across the board, is that the same people that are making executive decisions in the morning and wearing the suits and ties are the same guys that are out in the afternoon with their sleeves rolled up and up to their eyeballs in manure or grease...”, says Jeff.

Technology on the Farm

Technology has impacted a lot on the farm. Most dairy farms have a **nutritionist**, **agronomist** and **veterinarian** that helps them make decisions on their farm. (These jobs are associated with many types of farms. A nutritionist is an expert on food and nutrition. An agronomist is a scientist who works on ways to protect the soil and grow better crops. A veterinarian is an animal doctor.) In fact, there are a lot of dairy farmers that check their cows from their phone!

“...Technology allows us to do more with less,” Nonay explains.

Lakeside takes technology one step further to make use out of what most would consider garbage and helps the environment out too. The farm uses drywall scraps and composts them on the farm.

Family Farming, Local Products and Feeding the World

A common misconception is that the farms in Alberta and across Canada are a dying breed. This is false. Family farms are thriving, despite the farms getting bigger. The average herd size in our province is about 93 cows.

A lot of what keep the family farms flourishing in our nation derives from our marketing system, supply management. (**Supply management** means that milk producers control the amount and prices of milk to keep the milk supply local in Canada.) In the dairy industry, it helps ensure that it keeps your milk and dairy products local and high quality.



Infographics used with permission from Agriculture More Than Ever. www.agriculturemorethanever.ca/resources/fact-photos/page/3/

Consumers have a high impact on decision making on the farm. Many farms, like Lakeside, reach out into the community to welcome visitors to learn more about why they have a really cool job. As only 2 per cent of the population works in farming, Jeff values the relationship between those that make food and those that consume it; trust is very important.

Through the dairy, potatoes and meat operation on his farm, Lakeside Dairy farm is able to help feed the world.

"[Last year] our farm was able to feed about 13,000 people."

A lot of the food that comes off his farm is feeding local people. The milk from his farm goes to Edmonton, less than an hour away to be processed and hits local shelves for Edmontonians to enjoy. Additionally, you can find meat from his farm at Darcy Meats in Edmonton as well. He goes on to say that even the french fries from McDonalds could have started from his potato operation.

"I think with farming, it's in your blood," says Jeff.

Alberta Milk. *Every Wonder What Being a Dairy Farmer is Like?* <https://albertamilk.com/news/2015/07/ever-wonder-what-being-dairy-farmer/>

What is one way you think the jobs of the farmers in these stories may change ten years into the future? Why do you think this?

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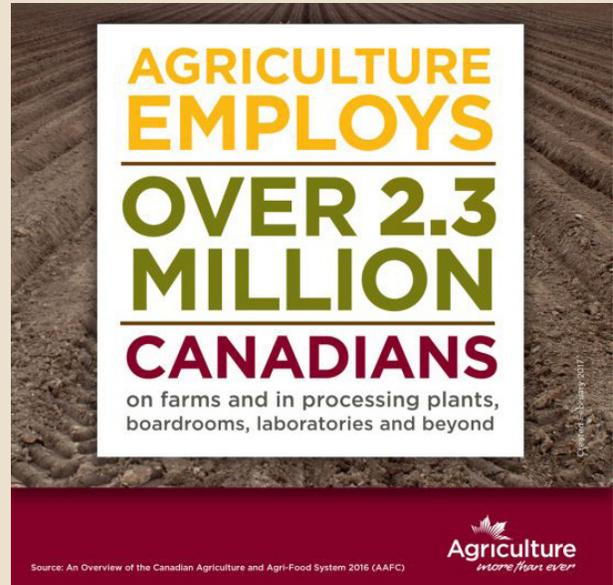
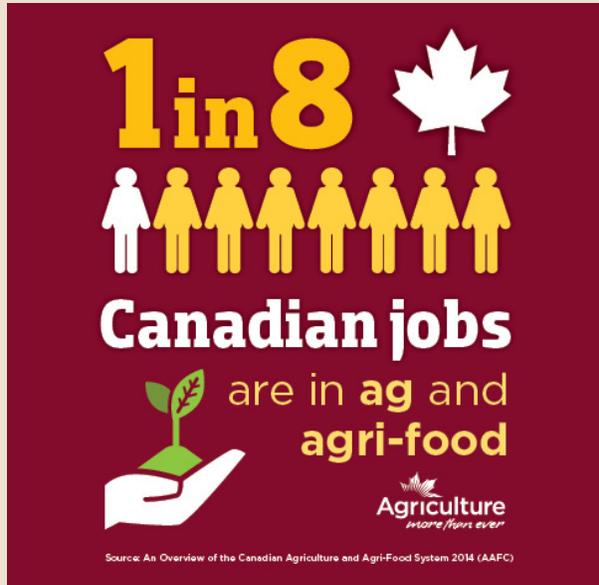
How many people does it take to make a glass of milk?

When you drink a glass of milk, do you think about who made it and how it got into your fridge at home? Every product that we use or eat comes from somewhere and is made by someone.

The food we eat is one important way we are connected to our communities. A glass of milk connects you to people who live in rural and urban communities. You might be surprised to learn how many people it takes to get dairy products from a farm to your table.



Job Facts



Over 10 000 Albertans rely on milk to make a living. These people include veterinarians, nutritionists, researchers, professors, salesmen, milk haulers, store employees, and processing plant workers.

Many communities also rely on milk. Dairy farmers hire people from nearby communities to work on their farms. Farmers also buy food and other products from stores in the community. Sometimes, they buy seed, fertilizers, and machines in the community to plant crops that feed their cows.

Infographics used with permission from Agriculture More Than Ever. www.agriculturemorethanever.ca/resources/fact-photos/page/3/

The journey of milk starts on the farm, as it has for hundreds of years, with a farmer and a cow. Early dairy farmers had a close connection with the people who used their products, and often delivered those products directly to their neighbours.



Home Delivery



Delivery trucks such as this one were a familiar sight many years ago, delivering milk and other dairy products directly to homes.

Today, dairy farmers rely on **milk haulers**, or people who are licensed to collect the milk, to deliver it to dairy processing plants.

When it's time for milking, cows are moved into a **milking parlour**, a part of the barn where farmers keep the milking machines. Modern milking machines use computer technology and robotics to milk each cow once or twice a day.

The people who design and build these specialized machines need to know about computers and robots, as well as have a good understanding of how to milk a cow.

The proper care of dairy cows includes feeding, watering, providing shelter and monitoring health and safety. Dairy cows are fed a diet that has lots of fibre. Most dairy farmers produce at least some of the feed on their farms. Cows that are comfortable and well cared for grow better, are healthier and produce more milk.



Who's Behind Your Milk?

Watch this video! Go to <https://albertamilk.com/news/2015/02/video-whos-behind-your-milk/>.



This video spotlights Jake Vermeer, a second-generation farmer near Camrose. Jake is proud of working with family and to contribute to the economy in Alberta and across Canada.

Did you know that 46 percent, or almost half, of Alberta's dairy farmers are located in Wetaskiwin, Red Deer and Wildrose? Those producers create nearly 5000 jobs.

How do you think the "journey of milk" might change in the future? What could cause this change?

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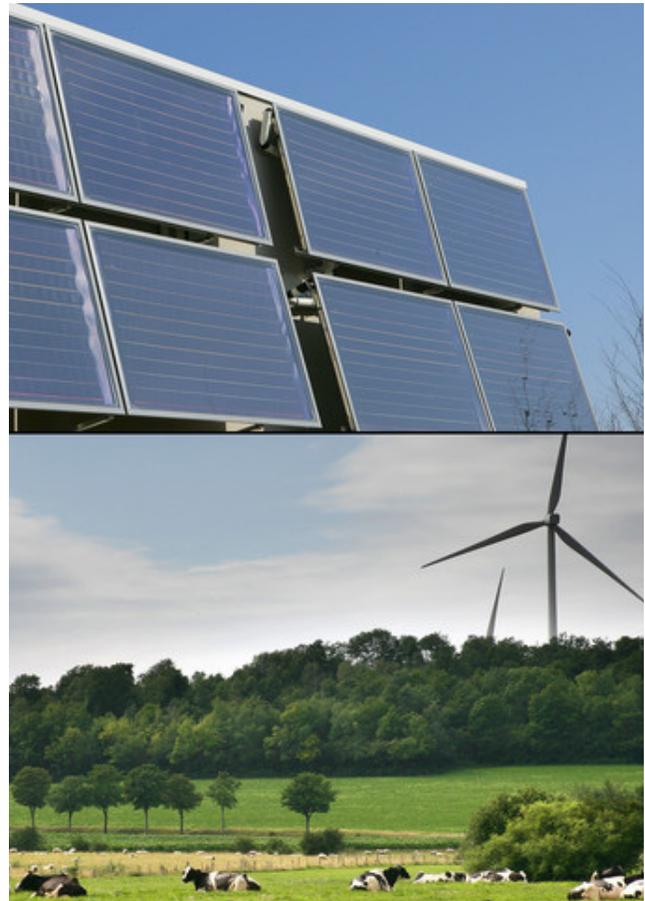
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How is the environment affected by the journey of milk? Dairy farmers and others who work in the dairy industry care about the environment. Farmers today have to be concerned with issues like:

- Protecting the soil so it keeps its nutrients.
- Managing manure. **Manure** refers to animal excrement that is used for fertilizer. It is a valuable by-product from dairy farms. Applying manure to cropland as a fertilizer is a sustainable agricultural practice because nutrients can be effectively recycled. Manure is a source of plant nutrients and improves the structure and water-holding ability of soil.
- Protecting the quality of the water. Agriculture uses water to irrigate crops and feed animals.
- Reducing greenhouse gases. **Greenhouse gases** are gaseous substances that can trap and hold heat in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases can include the methane that cows produce when they digest their food. Manure emits **methane**, the main component of natural gas, and nitrous oxide. If methane leaks into the air, it absorbs the sun's heat. This warms the atmosphere and contributes to climate change.

Check out these stories and information about dairy farmers who are finding ways to care for the environment:

- A farm in Quebec rotates the types of crops they grow on a field. This is called **crop rotation**. These farmers also make adjustments to their farm machinery to improve soil quality.
- Lakeside Dairy in Alberta uses ground up drywall with wood shavings for cow bedding. The bedding is composted and used with manure to make a fertilizer for the soil. This reduces construction waste that would have gone to a landfill.
- Greenhouse gases are reduced with improved feeding practices and management of manure. For example, here is a farm that is working to reduce gases.
- Many farms across Canada have invested in solar panels and windmills.





Job Board

Jobs in agriculture are closely connected to the land and its resources. A career in agriculture involves working directly with the land, animals, plants and water. However, agricultural jobs involve much more than that too.

Trends in agriculture have influenced the types and range of jobs in the **agri-food industry**, which refers to the production of food through the human activity of agriculture.



Future Opportunities



BY 2022, THERE WILL BE AN ESTIMATED
74,000 JOB OPPORTUNITIES
IN CANADIAN AGRICULTURE.

Canadian Occupational Projection Summaries (2013-2022)

Agriculture
more than ever

Infographic used with permission from Agriculture More Than Ever. www.agriculturemorethanever.ca/resources/fact-photos/page/3/

How many people work in agri-food?

- Jobs in agri-food make up 12 percent of total Canadian employment.
- Over 2.1 million Canadians are employed in the agri-food sector, directly providing one out of every 8 Canadians with jobs.
- Of that 2.1 million, there were 305 000 people working in primary agricultural jobs, which means working on a farm, nursery or greenhouse.
- For every 1 job in primary agriculture, there are 5 or 6 jobs in supporting areas and activities.

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If there are 5 or 6 jobs in supporting areas of agriculture for every 1 job in primary agriculture, can you use this information to estimate the total number of supporting jobs?

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How do you think the agri-food industry might change in the future? Make one prediction.



Find your future in agriculture

Considering your career path?

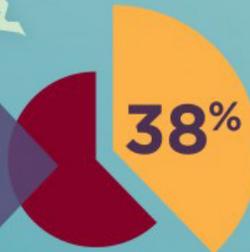
Consider a career in ag. There are more opportunities, and more things you can do, than you might realize.



2.1 million

Ag employs over 2.1 million Canadians.

From 2011-2020 it's projected that 38% of jobs in the Canadian ag industry will be unfilled, creating opportunities in a variety of fields.



1 in 8

Canadian jobs are in ag and agri-food.

In 2013, there were more than 56,000 career opportunities available in the ag industry in North America.

56,000 career opportunities

Created August 2014

Are you looking for a job that's :
You'll find it in ag.

Canada will play a vital role in feeding the world and we need great people to make it happen.



AgMoreThanEver.ca

A positive voice for Canadian agriculture



Agriculture
more than ever



Job Cloud



Infographics used with permission from Agriculture More Than Ever. www.agriculturemorethanever.ca/resources/fact-photos/page/4/

What does the **Feeding Canada and the World** infographic and the **Job Cloud** tell you about agricultural jobs in Canada? Write two observations.

Agriculture is important to Canada's economic well-being. The importance of different jobs varies across Canadian provinces.

Food processing activities are found more in the central and eastern provinces. Primary industry jobs are found across the prairies. A **primary industry** uses natural resources and materials to make products. Primary industries include forestry, agriculture and fishing.

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Why do you think food processing is found in central and eastern Canada while primary industry jobs are found in western Canada?

Do you think this difference between the agricultural activities in eastern and western Canada can change? Why?

Do you think the main human activities in eastern and western Canada should change? Explain who would benefit and who would not.

Did you know these facts about agriculture in Canada?

- Canada is the world's largest producer and exporter of flaxseed, canola, pulses, durum wheat, peas, lentils and mustard seeds.
- The meat processing industry is Canada's third largest manufacturing industry, ranking behind motor vehicles and petroleum products.
- Canada's is the world's largest producer of blueberries.

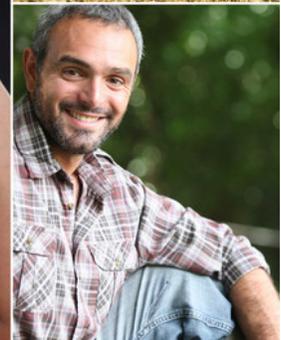
- Canada produces 85 percent of the world’s maple syrup.
- The value of honey bees to Canadian agriculture is over \$1 billion.
- Sales of milk and dairy products contribute \$10 billion to the Canadian economy.
- Canada is the world’s 5th largest exporter of agricultural products.
- World food demand will increase 70 percent by 2050.

Although jobs on a farm are the backbone of agriculture, there are many agricultural jobs that go beyond. For example, take the dairy industry.

Dairy involves a wide variety of jobs that involve working with the land, technology, animals, people and resources. A dairy job can be a researcher, scientist, factory worker, manager or driver.

Here’s a list of some of the many jobs that are connected to dairy farming. Match them to the job board that follows.

- Calf Rearer
- Dairy Farmer
- Dairy Herd Worker
- Dairy Inspector
- Dairy Manager or Supervisor
- Dairy Nutritionist
- Farm Family Member
- Grocery Worker
- Hoof Trimmer
- Milk Hauler
- Milker
- Milk Processor
- Scientist
- Supplier
- Technician
- Veterinarian



How many of the jobs on this job board can you identify? How many of these jobs do you think apply to other types of farming?

 Jobs that Depend on Natural Resources	 Jobs Involved with Dairy Processing	 Jobs that Provide Services or Goods
<p>I take responsibility for all of the work on my farm. I make sure all my dairy cows are milked. I also check to make sure they are fed with the correct feed, have water, and are healthy. I keep track of the dairy cow herd and calves. I sometimes hire other workers to help with all of these responsibilities. However, I make all the decisions involved with producing milk and running the farm. Who am I?</p>	<p>I can have different jobs, depending on whether I manage or supervise work on a dairy farm or in a dairy processing plant. If I work on a larger dairy farm, I keep track of and make decisions about the health of the dairy herd. I supervise milking, feeding, and care of the dairy cows. If I work in a dairy processing plant, I oversee and help other workers with the production of dairy products. Who am I?</p>	<p>I may have different jobs, depending on whether I visit farms or dairy processing plants. I make sure that government rules and laws for quality and cleanliness are followed. If I inspect farms, I make sure the cows are healthy and their living spaces are clean. I check milking and storage equipment. If I inspect dairy processing plants, I check how milk is processed and that the equipment is cleaned and sanitized daily. Who am I?</p>
<p>We help with all of the responsibilities on our dairy farm. We can help look after the dairy cow herd. This includes handling the cows, feeding them, and making sure they have water. We also help keep their living spaces clean. And we help with any other general jobs around our farm. Who are we?</p>	<p>I am licensed to collect the milk and deliver it to dairy processing plants. I pick up milk from farms every second day. I keep records on all the milk I pick up and deliver. I take a sample of milk from the truck's refrigerated tank to test it. I also take samples of the milk before it is unloaded at the dairy processing plant. Who am I?</p>	<p>I work with dairy farmers to develop a health care plan for their dairy cow herd. I also respond to health emergencies. I often carry all of my medical supplies in my vehicle, as sometimes I have to drive long distances to visit the farmers I work with. Who am I?</p>
<p>I work very closely with dairy cows. I make sure that the cows are milked two, and sometimes three, times a day. I also check on the dairy cows to make sure they are healthy. I often work long hours because I must be available for milking times, no matter how early or late in the day. Who am I?</p>	<p>I work with milk from the time it arrives at a dairy processing plant until it is made into a dairy product. These dairy products include fluid milk, creams, butter, yogurt, cheeses, and ice cream. I work with the machinery that is used to produce milk. However, human hands, including mine, never touch the milk. Who am I?</p>	<p>I can have different jobs, depending on whether I work with dairy cows or with people. If I work with dairy cows, I make sure they receive healthy feed. If I work with people, I need to know and understand the nutritional value of dairy products. I give people advice and information about healthy food and drink choices in their daily diets. Who am I?</p>

 Jobs that Depend on Natural Resources	 Jobs Involved with Dairy Processing	 Jobs that Provide Services or Goods
<p>I spend time handling, feeding, and caring for dairy cows. I provide care for dairy cows by removing manure, changing bedding materials, and washing out living spaces. I have to be able to drive trucks or operate farm machinery to bring food and other supplies to the dairy cows. Sometimes, I may help milk the cows. I may also do general jobs around the dairy farm. Who am I?</p>		<p>I may do different types of research and experiments for the dairy industry. My work can include food science and new dairy products. I might do research to find out more about the nutritional value of dairy foods. I may also work to improve the care of dairy cows and calves. Or, my research can be about finding better ways to protect the environment on dairy farms. Who am I?</p>
<p>I am responsible for rearing, or raising, dairy calves. I help handle, feed, and care for them. I can work both indoors and outdoors. I keep track of each calf when it is born. I also keep records about their health and growth. Who am I?</p>		<p>I am responsible for ordering, stocking, and selling processed dairy products to people. I make sure that products are available on grocery store shelves and that they are fresh. I help look after customers. The milk products I sell include fluid milk, creams, butter, yogurt, cheeses, and ice cream. These products are sold to my grocery store by dairy processors. Who am I?</p>
<p>Dairy cows that live in indoor spaces must have their hooves trimmed on a regular basis. I know how to trim hooves without hurting or injuring the cow. I also look for signs of diseases or injuries and help farmers treat any problems. Who am I?</p>		<p>I supply different types of products to farmers or dairy processors, depending on the company I work for. I might sell milking equipment or items used to make stalls and floor surfaces in a barn. I may also sell machinery and vehicles used on the farm. Or, I could sell milk storage tanks and pipeline systems for a dairy farm or dairy processor. My company may provide seed or feed for dairy cows and calves. Who am I?</p>
		<p>I can have different jobs, depending on whether I work in a lab or dairy processing plant or if I work directly with a veterinarian. If I work in a lab or processing plant, I test milk samples that are collected by a milk hauler. If I work with a veterinarian, I look after the health of dairy cows and calves. I help the veterinarian identify diseases or injuries, give vaccinations, prepare medicine, and keep records on the health of the animals. Who am I?</p>

Find the job match in the chart below.

 Jobs that Depend on Natural Resources	 Jobs Involved with Dairy Processing	 Jobs that Provide Services or Goods
Dairy Farmer	Dairy Manager or Supervisor	Dairy Inspector
Farm Family Member	Milk Hauler	Veterinarian
Milker	Milk Processor	Dairy Nutritionist
Dairy Herd Worker		Scientist
Calf Rearer		Grocery Worker
Hoof Trimmer		Supplier
		Technician