

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Friday, September 5, 2008

## Wisconsin Milk Production Could Exceed Plant Capacity

America's Dairyland could overflow its own milk capacity within the next few years, according to projections in a report prepared by the University of Wisconsin's Bob Cropp.

The *Wisconsin Cheese Plant Capacity and Future Milk Production* report released in July indicated that the reversal of a decade-long trend of declining milk and cow numbers may mean that milk production could exceed the state's current ability to process it.

For years, milk production has lagged behind the statewide capacity of dairy processing plants, creating a deficit that was fulfilled by trucking in various forms of milk for the cheesemaking process, including condensed milk and nonfat dry milk. Wisconsin cheese plants need a large amount of milk to make their signature cheeses: in 2007 cheesemakers poured 24.5 billion pounds (2.8 billion gallons) of milk into their cheese vats.

Wisconsin milk production is growing. Both the number of cows and the amount each cow produces has increased in recent years. In 2007, Wisconsin cows produced 24.1 billion pounds of milk and 90 percent was made into cheese. If this increase continues, Wisconsin dairies could produce two billion more pounds of milk by 2012, Dr. Cropp estimates, positioning the state to reach its greatest peak in milk production in twenty years.

"The growth in Wisconsin's milk production can be attributed to a positive business environment for the dairy industry. A recent survey of DBA dairy producer members shows plans to invest \$116 million this year alone in dairy building, expansion and modernization projects," said Laurie Fischer, executive director of the Dairy Business Association.

"Wisconsin can accommodate the current annual growth rate for only a short time without adding significant cheese plant processing capacity. Fortunately, many Wisconsin cheesemakers are adding capacity at their existing plants. I expect Wisconsin's cheese industry to continue to grow and DBA looks forward to siting a new cheese plant in America's Dairyland, that will utilize our increased milk production," said Fischer.

According to the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, investments are occurring on the processing side as well. Three new cheese plants entered production this year alone, and several other makers upgraded facilities. Growing milk supplies could push plants across the state to peak capacity, according to John Umhoefer, executive director, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association.

"Wisconsin dairy producers have turned around a downward trend and supplies of local, fresh milk are on the rise. It's great news for Wisconsin's economy, our families and agricultural businesses. Wisconsin's cheese industry will capitalize on growing milk production to add plant capacity and make more award-winning cheese," Umhoefer said.

The Dairy Business Association is an industry organization comprised of dairy producers, corporate and allied industry supporters. DBA promotes the growth and success of all dairy farms in Wisconsin by fostering a positive business and political environment. For more information about DBA, please visit our website at [www.widba.com](http://www.widba.com).

(###)