

Top 50 cooperatives boost production despite having fewer member farms

by Chelsey Johnson

LAST year, the top 50 cooperatives accounted for 79 percent of the 195.2 billion pounds of milk marketed in the U.S. The top five cooperatives handled 54 percent of the milk marketed by the top 50 and they handled 43 percent of the entire nation's milk.

The top 50 had 38,462 member farms which represented a 5.1 percent drop from a year ago. This was a greater decline than the drop in overall number of licensed U.S. dairies in 2011 which went from 53,132 farms to 51,481. Despite this fall in farm numbers, total milk production from

the top 50 list rose 1.9 billion pounds. This 1.2 percent rise is a slightly smaller climb than the 1.7 percent change in the national total of milk marketed in 2011.

The top five held their positions from last year, while a number of cooperatives in the top 25 traded places. At No. 6, Family Dairies USA overtook Associated Milk Producers, Inc. More trade offs occurred further down the list as Agri-Mark, Inc., moved ahead of Milwaukee Cooperative Milk Producers to No. 16, and Continental Dairy Products, Inc., edged Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc., out of the No. 19 spot. Security Milk Producers, Inc., upped production enough to surpass Swiss Valley Farms at No. 21. Making a debut appearance in the upper

half of the list, Organic Valley/CROPP rounded out the top 25.

For the second straight year, White Eagle Cooperative was the biggest mover, rising from No. 42 to No. 38. Just missing this year's top 50 was Preble Milk Cooperative Assn., Preble, N.Y. Select Milk Producers, Inc., topped this list for milk per dairy with 70.2 million pounds per member dairy.

Hoard's Dairyman gathers information for the top 50 cooperatives list every summer. Each cooperative is contacted and asked to provide information on the previous year's production. Because cooperatives have different ending dates for their fiscal year, milk volume and member farms may not necessarily represent the 2011 calendar year.

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Rank	Dairy cooperative	Member milk volume (bil. lbs.)	Member farms	Rank	Dairy cooperative	Member milk volume (bil. lbs.)	Member farms
1	✓ Dairy Farmers of America, Inc. Kansas City, Mo.	39.000	8,697	26	Woodstock Progressive Milk Producers, Assn. Woodstock, Ill.	0.916	375
2	California Dairies, Inc. Visalia, Calif.	16.818	495	27	Magic Valley Quality Milk Producers, Inc. Jerome, Idaho	0.899	35
3	✓ Land O'Lakes, Inc. St. Paul, Minn.	13.010	2,586	28	✓ Zia Milk Producers, Inc. Roswell, N.M.	0.857	15
4	✓ Northwest Dairy Association Seattle, Wash.	7.880	547	29	Lanco-Pennland Quality Milk Producers Hagerstown, Md.	0.738	684
5	✓ Dairy Lea Cooperative, Inc. Syracuse, N.Y.	6.300	2,225	30	✓ Farmers Cooperative Creamery McMinnville, Ore.	0.724	70
6	Family Dairies USA Madison, Wis.	5.910	2,310	31	Bongards' Creameries Bongards, Minn.	0.711	300
7	✓ Associated Milk Producers, Inc. New Ulm, Minn.	5.800	2,800	32	Mount Joy Farmers Cooperative Mount Joy, Pa.	0.696	316
8	✓ Foremost Farms USA Baraboo, Wis.	5.741	1,945	33	High Desert Milk, Inc. Burley, Idaho	0.654	14
9	✓ Manitowoc Milk Producers Cooperative Manitowoc, Wis.	5.100	2,663	34	✓ Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery Ellsworth, Wis.	0.650	460
10	✓ Select Milk Producers, Inc. Artesia, N.M.	4.211	60	35	✓ Tillamook County Creamery Association Tillamook, Ore.	0.546	105
11	✓ Michigan Milk Producers Association Novi, Mich.	3.900	1,364	36	Plainview Milk Products Cooperative Plainview, Minn.	0.482	220
12	✓ United Dairymen of Arizona Tempe, Ariz.	3.712	70	37	Cobblestone Milk Cooperative, Inc. Chatham, Va.	0.394	19
13	✓ Maryland and Virginia Milk Prod. Co-op Assn. Reston, Va.	3.000	1,524	38	White Eagle Cooperative Association South Bend, Ind.	0.364	12
14	✓ Lone Star Milk Producers Windthorst, Texas	2.910	209	39	Scenic Central Milk Producers Co-op Assn. Yuba, Wis.	0.360	253
15	✓ Southeast Milk, Inc. Belleview, Fla.	2.700	251	40	Central Equity Milk Cooperative, Inc. Billings, Mo.	0.337	109
16	✓ Agri-Mark, Inc. Lawrence, Mass.	2.630	1,270	41	Burnett Dairy Cooperative Grantsburg, Wis.	0.336	212
17	Milwaukee Cooperative Milk Producers Brookfield, Wis.	2.090	495	42	Lowville Producers Dairy Cooperative, Inc. Lowville, N.Y.	0.314	177
18	✓ Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc. Buffalo, N.Y.	1.717	400	43	✓ Mid-West Dairymen's Company Rockford, Ill.	0.298	164
19	✓ Continental Dairy Products, Inc. Artesia, N.M.	1.706	29	44	✓ Cooperative Milk Producers Association Blackstone, Va.	0.240	98
20	✓ Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc. Carlinville, Ill.	1.700	818	45	Cortland Bulk Milk Producers Co-op, Inc. Cortland, N.Y.	0.222	92
21	Security Milk Producers Association Chino, Calif.	1.492	43	46	Hastings Cooperative Creamery Company Hastings, Minn.	0.211	104
22	✓ Swiss Valley Farms Company Davenport, Iowa	1.433	684	47	Sunrise Ag Cooperative Buckman, Minn.	0.207	160
23	✓ First District Association Litchfield, Minn.	1.278	661	48	Calhoun Cooperative Creamery Company Lansing, Iowa	0.199	72
24	✓ St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc. St. Albans, Vt.	1.257	449	49	Northwest Independent Milk Producers Assn. East Olympia, Wash.	0.182	18
25	Organic Valley/CROPP La Farge, Wis.	1.221	1,687	50	Rolling Hills Dairy Producers Co-op Browntown, Wis.	0.176	96
✓	Member of National Milk Producers Federation			Total		154.228	38,462