

# Labor on U.S. Dairy Farms

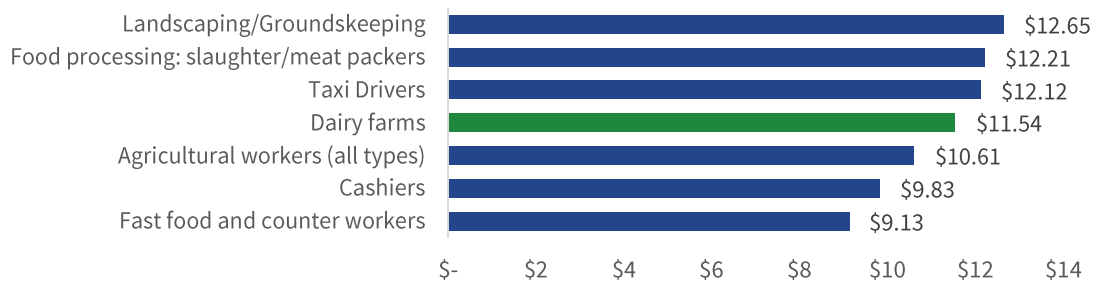
Dairy farms across the country hire workers to help make nutritious milk and dairy products. Ensuring workers' safety and wellbeing is a key focus of the dairy industry and has led to creating the Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) Workforce Development program. FARM Workforce Development provides resources and guidance for dairy owners and managers to maintain thriving work environments. An important step is understanding where dairy farms stand today.<sup>1</sup>

## Dairy farms hire an average of 5 employees per farm

There are a lot of jobs to do on the dairy. For example, a 'milker' is responsible for bringing cows in to the parlor, milking the cows, and inspecting them for any possible health issues. A 'feeder' provides feed for the cows, ensures there is adequate drinking water, and checks on them regularly throughout the day. Dairy farms employ an estimated total of over 150,000 workers, 76% of which are full-time employees. The dairy workforce is also diverse, with immigrant labor accounting for 51% of all dairy labor.

## Dairy farm workers earn 159% times the federal minimum wage

The average wage on surveyed dairy farms is \$11.54 per hour, 159% of the federal minimum wage. Dairy farm wages are higher than occupations in some sectors, and lower than in others.<sup>2</sup>

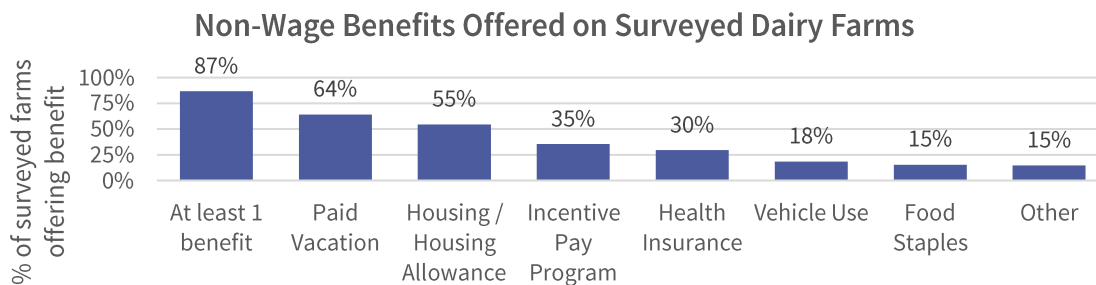


## Dairy farms have low employee turnover

The average employee turnover rate reported on surveyed dairy farms is 14.2% - the percentage of employees that left and were replaced in the past year. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the average turnover rate for private employers across all industries is 38.1%.<sup>3</sup>

## Dairy workers receive a variety of non-wage benefits

Many workplaces use non-wage benefits to attract and retain employees. Dairy farms are no different. The most commonly reported benefit is paid vacation time.



<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise cited, figures are from a national dairy farm survey, conducted by Texas A&M University, representing calendar year 2013 data. More details about the survey and analysis are found online at:

<http://www.nmpf.org/files/immigration-survey-090915.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Occupational wage data from 2013 BLS data: <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Figure from 2013 BLS data: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.t16.htm>

