Agriculture is an important economic force in Jefferson County. It includes hundreds of family-owned farms, related businesses and industries that provide equipment, services and other products farmers need to process, market and deliver food and fiber to consumers. The production, sales and processing of Jefferson County’s farm products generate employment, economic activity, income and tax revenue.

Jefferson County agriculture is diverse. Although dairy generates the highest annual income of all agricultural commodities, Jefferson County ranks among Wisconsin’s top counties in aquaculture, as well as the production of ducks, forages, nursery stock, pheasants, poultry, eggs, soybeans and tobacco. Jefferson County also ranks high in the total value of its agricultural crops.

Agriculture provides jobs for almost 10,850 Jefferson County residents.

Agriculture accounts for $1.51 billion in economic activity.

Agriculture contributes $442.6 million to the county’s total income.

Agriculture pays $40.2 million in taxes. This figure does not include all property taxes paid to local schools.

Who owns the farms?

- Individuals or families—89.7%
- Family partnerships—6.6%
- Family-owned corporations—6.6%
- Non-family corporations—0.1%

Horticulture is growing in Jefferson County

The production of landscape trees and plants as well as landscape and grounds maintenance are rapidly growing segments of Jefferson County’s agricultural industry. Greenhouses, tree farms, nurseries, sod farms and other horticultural businesses add to the diversity of agriculture in the county. Horticulture generates $10.9 million in county economic activity, providing 222 full-time jobs and many seasonal jobs.

Agriculture and the environment

Jefferson County farmers own and manage the resources on 247,914 acres of land—70 percent of all land in the county. This includes pastures, cropland and tree farms. Farmers implement various conservation practices to protect environmental resources and provide habitat for wildlife.

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Photos: front—USDA; inside—Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board; back—Mike Ballweg

Produced in 2004 to increase the awareness of agriculture in Jefferson County by:
University of Wisconsin–Extension, Cooperative Extension
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board

Economic data (2000) provided by Steve Deller, professor of agriculture and applied economics, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison and community development specialist, University of Wisconsin–Extension, Cooperative Extension.
Agriculture provides jobs
Jefferson County agriculture provides 10,849 jobs. That's over 23 percent of Jefferson County's workforce of more than 46,640 people. These jobs are diverse—farm owners, on-farm employees, veterinarians, crop and livestock consultants, feed and fuel suppliers, food processors, farm machinery manufacturers and dealers, barn builders and agricultural lenders, just to name a few. Every new job in agriculture generates an additional 1.1 jobs in Jefferson County.

Agriculture stimulates economic activity
Jefferson County agriculture generates more than $1.51 billion in economic activity, accounting for about 33 percent of Jefferson County's total economic activity. Every dollar of sales of agricultural products generates an additional $0.59 of economic activity in other parts of the Jefferson County economy.

Here's how agriculture's $1.51 billion economic impact breaks down:
- The direct effect of agriculture is $949.7 million and includes the sale of all farm products and value-added products.
- Purchases of agricultural inputs and services create another $451.5 million in economic activity; for example, business-to-business purchases such as fuel, fertilizer, feed, farm equipment, veterinary services and crop consultants.
- This business-to-business activity then generates another $111.9 million in economic activity, because people who work in agriculture-related businesses spend their earnings.

Agriculture contributes to county income
Agriculture accounts for $442.6 million—21.6 percent of Jefferson County's total income. This includes wages, salaries, benefits and profits of farmers and workers in agriculture-related businesses. Every dollar of agricultural income generates an additional $1.23 of county income.

Agriculture pays taxes
Economic activity associated with Jefferson County's farms and agriculture-related businesses generate almost $40.2 million in local and state taxes. This figure does not include all property taxes paid to support local schools. If it did, the number would increase dramatically.

Table 1. Taxes paid by agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate profit tax</td>
<td>$1.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees/charges/other</td>
<td>$6.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income tax</td>
<td>$10.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales tax</td>
<td>$9.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property tax</td>
<td>$11.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$40.2 million</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dairy’s impact in Jefferson County
Dairy is the largest part of Jefferson County’s agriculture. Jefferson County milk producers and the dairy industry contribute $43.1 million to the county’s economy. The on-farm production and sale of milk accounts for $41.36 million in economic activity. The processing of milk into dairy products accounts for another $1.73 million.

- One dairy cow generates $1,818 in direct income to producers.
- Each dairy cow generates more than $15,000 to $17,000 of economic activity.
- Five plants process dairy products in Jefferson County.
- Jefferson County’s on-farm milk production and dairy processing account for about 360 jobs.

Table 2. Jefferson County’s top commodities (sales by dollar value, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Milk</td>
<td>$34.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grain</td>
<td>$29.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Eggs</td>
<td>$25.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nursery stock and sod</td>
<td>$24.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vegetables</td>
<td>$6.7 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>