



 WISCONSIN MILK  
MARKETING BOARD  
WISCONSIN DAIRY PRODUCERS

### *Teacher Notes:*

4th Grade Educators: You can re-use the Taste Wisconsin farm and discuss agriculture with your students any time during the school year. Please follow these notes to play the trivia game about Wisconsin grown foods.

**We are going to talk about agriculture and economy in the state of Wisconsin. Can anyone tell me the definition of the word “agriculture”?**

It means farming—the production of food by growing crops and raising animals.

- Farmers own almost half of the land in Wisconsin, 16 million acres.
- How big is an acre? About the size of a football field.

**Agriculture is very important to the economy in Wisconsin today. What is the definition of “economy”?**

The goods, services and money made and used by a group of people—in this case by all Wisconsinites.

- Wisconsin agriculture contributes \$51.5 billion in economic activity each year—meaning that agriculture and jobs related to it helps keep our entire state working.
- The dairy business contributes \$20.6 billion dollars each year to Wisconsin’s economy. (\$20,600,000,000)

**Wisconsin has 14,000 dairy farms milking cows — and Wisconsin milk is made into cheese and other great tasting dairy products.**

- 1/5th of all dairy farms in the US are in Wisconsin.
- 1.25 million dairy cows are on farms in Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin farms have just what dairy cows need to stay healthy: people to care for them; forage like hay and silage to eat; plenty of water to drink; a healthy climate.
- Wisconsin cows produce enough milk to make 10 gallons of milk each week for every Wisconsinite. 90% (9 out of every 10 gallons) or more is used by our Wisconsin cheesemakers— they make 2.4 billion pounds of cheese every year.

**Wisconsin was named “America’s Dairyland” in 1939. How is dairy farming a part of the history of our state?**

- Wisconsin has over 160 years of experience when it comes to dairy. Immigrants settled in Wisconsin from Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland because of available farm land for dairy cows.
- After 1850, dairy farming became important in the state. Farms changed from wheat (crop) farms to dairy farms and many families began cheesemaking as a way to preserve extra milk.
- In 1841, the first cheese factory was started by Mrs. Anne Pickett using milk from neighbors’ cows—today we have 115 cheese factories.

**Wisconsin Agriculture is a grocery store for the United States.**

Not only do we produce a lot of milk and cheese, Wisconsin also grows many crops.

**Many of the foods grown in Wisconsin are at your local grocery store for you and your family to eat and enjoy.**

- Did you know that you can buy cheese made in Wisconsin?
- Milk produced by Wisconsin cows?
- Corn harvested from the fields of Wisconsin and processed in a nearby factory?
- Green beans harvested and frozen very quickly to guarantee a fresh flavor?
- Wild rice harvested in fields that Native Americans harvested more than 300 years ago?



Today we are going to learn more about some of the healthy foods that travel from Wisconsin farms to Wisconsin grocery stores.

I will give clues about each Wisconsin food and you will need to guess what I might be describing. We will identify the source of the food on the farm and add them to the board as we learn.

### MILK

- Wisconsin has 14,000 farms producing this beverage
- 4th graders need at least three glasses every day to get enough calcium to build strong bones
- It is our state's official beverage

**FACT:** Wisconsin ranks #2 in milk production. Wisconsin Dairy Farms produce enough milk every year to meet the calcium needs of 106 million people.



### CHEDDAR CHEESE

- one piece about the size of an adult's thumb gives your bones the same amount of calcium as one cup of milk
- Wisconsin Cheesemakers began making in the mid-1800's and Wisconsin is still the leading producer in the US
- packages of this product made in Wisconsin will have a small state symbol on them

**FACT:** Wisconsin ranks 1st in the nation for cheese production and makes more cheddar cheese than any other state.

### STRAWBERRIES

- these berries are high in vitamin C and low in calories
- one of these berries will have 400 seeds on the outside
- they can't be picked by machine and must be harvested by hand every summer

**FACT:** Wisconsin farms grow enough to fill over 8 million jars of strawberry jam.

### WHEAT

- Wisconsin's first major crop—many farms grew this in the early 1800's—before switching over to dairy farms
- for fiber in your diet include whole grain versions
- assuming a sandwich is eaten at breakfast, lunch and dinner, it would take 168 days to eat the amount of made from just one bushel of this product.

**FACT:** Wisconsin grows almost 20 million bushels of wheat every year. How big is a bushel? About the size of a small round laundry basket.

### MUENSTER CHEESE

- Wisconsin-made dairy product full of calcium to help bones grow and stay strong
- recognized by the bright orange color on the outside edges
- the name may remind you of some scary things that go bump in the night

**FACT:** Wisconsin makes 2 out of every 3 pounds of Muenster cheese, making us #1 in the nation.

### PORK

- 440,000 of these animals live on Wisconsin farms—compared to 1.25 million dairy cows
- a meat that is an excellent source of thiamin, the B vitamin needed to help our bodies use energy from food
- used to make pepperoni—America's number one choice for pizza topping; might also eat as ham, bacon, sausage or chops.

**FACT:** Wisconsin produced 218 million pounds of pork in 2007. (14 out of every 100 pounds in the US)

## APPLES

- Wisconsin farms grow over 300 different kinds of this fruit on trees
- contains lots of fiber to keep you healthy
- average American eats 65 of these in one year, teachers probably eat more!

**FACT:** Wisconsin grows 59 million pounds of apples every year on trees in 46 of the 72 counties —rank 9th in the US for apple production.

## EGGS

- domesticated birds needed to produce this food came to America with Christopher Columbus
- source of the highest quality protein of any food and it is one of just a few foods that naturally contain vitamin D
- white ones are produced by birds with white feathers, brown ones are produced by birds with brown feathers

**FACT:** each year, Wisconsin farms produce 1.4 billion eggs; enough for every Wisconsinite to eat 1 every other day.

## SWISS CHEESE

- one of the 600 varieties, types and styles made in Wisconsin
- first full scale cheese factory was founded in 1859 by Hiram Smith—he processed milk from other dairy farmers for a percentage of the profit from the finished cheese
- this cheese has eyes, but they can't actually see

**FACT:** Wisconsin wins more awards for its cheeses than any other state or country.



## CORN

- farmers around the world grow this crop—it is grown on every continent except Antarctica
- in Wisconsin, it is the official state grain
- yellow vegetable supplies carbohydrates for energy and potassium to help your muscles contract

**FACT:** Wisconsin ranks 12th in the nation for growing sweet corn for fresh market and 3rd in the nation for growing sweet corn for processing. We rank 2nd in the nation for growing corn for silage for animal food.

## WILD RICE

- first harvested or gathered in Wisconsin from low lying wetlands and dried for winter diets by Native Americans
- good source of protein and a source of fiber to keep us healthy
- grows best in cold climates and is native to Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest

**FACT:** 12 northern Wisconsin counties permit wild rice harvesting—it is harvested the same way as when the first Native Americans gathered and dried it for part of their winter diets.

## CRANBERRIES

- these small red berries are harvested from Wisconsin bogs in 18 counties
- high in vitamin C to fight off infections and high in antioxidants, nutrients to keep your heart healthy
- we usually eat these with turkey at Thanksgiving and Christmas; we can buy them fresh, frozen, made into sauce and canned, or in a tart tasting juice

**FACT:** Wisconsin ranks 1st in the nation for growing cranberries, over one-half (56%) of the US supply. How much is that? —the same in weight as 25,000 elephants!

## CHERRIES

- known as a nutrient “Super Fruit” it is an excellent source of vitamin A for healthy eyes, vitamin C to fight infections and antioxidants for a healthy heart
- there are about 7,000 on the average tree and it takes 250 to make 1 pie – that’s 28 pies per tree
- you may think it’s the pits that most of this delicious fruit comes from just one Wisconsin County (Door)

**FACT:** Wisconsin ranks 5th in the nation for cherry production. Door County grows 10 million pounds of cherries every year.

## MOZZARELLA CHEESE

- Wisconsin product first sold to other states in 1872
- almost half (45%) of the cheese used in restaurants is this variety
- Wisconsin makes over 750 million pounds each year as a favorite ingredient for the top of any pizza

**FACT:** Wisconsin ranks #2 for making Mozzarella cheese. Wisconsin produces 1/4 of the United States supply of mozzarella.



## BEEF

- one small serving, about the size of a deck of cards, provides protein for strong muscles
- one large animal produces enough of this meat to make 720 quarter pound burgers
- might eat grilled, with vegetables in stew, or ground up in tacos

**FACT:** Wisconsin farms rank 9th in the nation for producing beef.

## GREEN BEANS

- a super source of vitamin K— another nutrient we need to build strong bones and to help our blood clot when we bleed
- Columbus found these growing alongside corn (or maize) when he came to America
- frozen, canned or fresh you don’t have to be a giant to enjoy

**FACT:** Wisconsin produces 1/3 of the nation’s green beans, ranking us as #1.



## POTATOES

- this vegetable is a good source of carbohydrate for energy and is a source of vitamin C to help fight off infections
- first vegetable grown in space thanks to science developed by NASA and UW Madison
- mashed, baked or fried they are the most popular vegetable, possibly the only vegetable that all 4th graders like

**FACT:** Wisconsin ranks 3rd in the nation for growing potatoes. They are included in at least 1/3 of all meals eaten in the US.

## CARROTS

- first grown in Afghanistan over 2000 years ago
- an excellent source of vitamin A, important for good eyesight
- a root vegetable—meaning you pull it from the ground and eat the root

**FACT:** Wisconsin ranks #2 in the nation for processed carrots.

## CABBAGE

- Wisconsin's German immigrants brought seeds of this plant and began planting in their home gardens
- this vegetable can be eaten fresh in coleslaw, cooked in soup or fermented as a topping to a brat
- you will be a-head in healthy habits by including this nutrient rich vegetable in your diet

**FACT:** Wisconsin ranks 1st in the nation for growing cabbage for sauerkraut and 8th in the nation for growing cabbage for fresh market.

## CHOCOLATE MILK

- Wisconsin's 1.25 million cows each produce about 6 gallons of this every day
- this flavor is a great sports beverage—after practice and games it provides muscles with protein for growth, cells with carbohydrate for energy and bones with calcium
- served with school lunch every day, order it with a fast food meal or get it at the grocery store in a gallon

**FACT:** Chocolate milk has the same essential nutrients as white milk: calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, carbohydrate, niacin and riboflavin, vitamin B12. Milk is also 90% water.



**Are we lucky to have farmers grow our food?** It takes a lot of hard work. Food at the grocery store is easy to buy and often ready to eat. We talked about 20 different foods grown and produced in Wisconsin. The next time you go to the grocery store with your parents go on a scavenger hunt and look for at least 5 Wisconsin foods.

**Summary:** Complete the student handout as a class activity to review the facts and Taste Wisconsin foods highlighted. Discuss some of the foods with the students:

- Tell me a Wisconsin food you learned about today.
- How many of these foods are you likely to eat?
- How many of these foods might your parents buy?
- How many of these foods are served at school lunch?

*For more ideas and information, visit:*

[www.WisDairy.com/tastewi](http://www.WisDairy.com/tastewi)