

# The Great Dairy Adventure

Milking a cow by hand and posing for take-home milk mustache photos were among the fun memories that record numbers of visitors have of the 11th annual Great Dairy Adventure on July 22 at the Michigan State University (MSU) Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education.

“The Great Dairy Adventure is an enjoyable and educational consumer event that illustrates how milk gets from the farm to the table, and it teaches the importance of consuming at least three servings of dairy foods a day,” says Shari Blonde, Great Dairy Adventure event chairperson. “By participating in various hands-on activities and sampling healthy, refreshing dairy treats, children can more readily make the connection between cows on the farm and dairy products in grocery store coolers.”

Children of all ages got to take a turn milking a cow by hand, petting calves, creating craft projects and playing games, all while learning about various segments of the dairy industry.

“Nearly 4,000 people—including families, daycare providers and their students—enjoyed free dairy treats and the many learning stations and game and craft areas at this year’s event,” Blonde said. “This year’s event brought out record numbers of attendees who

participated in some new exhibits and educational activities. From toddlers to teenagers, there was something fun for everyone to experience.”

In addition to free dairy treats and take-home projects, participants had the chance to visit one-on-one with MSU large animal veterinary students during hands-on activities with cows. Parents and people who work with children were given nutrition educational materials that include simple, tasty recipe ideas to try at home.

The Great Dairy Adventure is part of the weeklong Michigan Dairy Expo, the largest dairy event in the state. Dairy producers and youth interested in dairy farming gather from across the state at the annual expo to compete in breed shows and showmanship contests; vie for awards in dairy cattle evaluation, quiz bowls and management contests; sell or purchase dairy animals; network with friends and industry colleagues; and celebrate the dairy industry.

Dairy promoters from all facets of Michigan’s dairy industry worked to make the day a success. If you wish to assist in next year’s event, contact Karla Macelli or Mindy Pratt at (248) 474-6672 in the MMPA Novi office.



*MMPA Member Representative Tom Stakenas taught visitors proper milking techniques with MMPA’s teaching udder used during MMPA’s Milker Training Schools each year. Tom and MMPA’s Food Systems Intern Karen Bastek showed participants how to use a teat dip cup or a sprayer, wipe the teats clean and apply a milking claw while they explained the importance of each step in the milking procedure.*

MMPA Dairy Communicator Evelyn Minnis, explains how a dairy farm operates to Great Dairy Adventure participants as they peruse the "Miracle of Milk" diorama. Many volunteers helped to make the day educational and exciting to the nearly 4,000 people attending the daylong event.



MSU student Rosemary Rice helped visitors try to milk a cow by hand.



The ever-popular milk mustache photos were a great way for participants to take home a lasting memory from the day.



Nearly 4,000 visitors, mostly children, attended this year's event.



Brave participants were able to don an exam glove and reach in to a teaching cow's cannula to see how the rumen works.