

# The Great Dairy Adventure



Nearly 3,000 people spent a fun summer day at the 13th annual Great Dairy Adventure consumer education day on July 21 at the Michigan State University (MSU) Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education.

“For many day-care providers, day camps, summer school programs and such, the Great Dairy Adventure is an annual event,” says Carla McLachlan, MSU 4-H and animal science event coordinator. “Every year I begin receiving calls in early January from schools and day cares to get the date so they can be sure to attend”

The free one-day event is geared to the young (and young at heart), families, day-care providers and summer campers, and anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of the importance of Michigan’s dairy industry to the state’s economy, the multi-step journey milk takes to reach our refrigerators and the nutritious benefits dairy products provide. It’s also an opportunity to talk to and learn from local farmers and ask questions about how food gets from the farm to your table.

“Our hope is that kids, parents and day-care providers learn about the importance of including dairy products as part of a balanced diet,” Carla says.

MMPA sponsored a lacing cow craft project and a mini milker training station. A variety of other activities, from making and eating a cheese “bug” to touching and smelling the feeds that cows eat, were on hand to amuse and educate participants. Children of all ages got to take their turn milking a cow by hand, petting calves, all while learning about various segments of the dairy industry. MSU athletes were on site to sign autographs. Some even joined in the fun by milking a cow or wearing the dairy costumes and posing for photos with participants.

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

The Great Dairy Adventure is part of the largest dairy event in Michigan, the Michigan Dairy Expo, a four-day event that brings together 4-H clubs from across the state to compete in different contests. If you would like to volunteer for next year’s Great Dairy Adventure, please contact Karla Macelli at MMPA’s Novi office 248-474-6672.

