

Sharing the Canadian Dairy Farmer Story with Our Consumers and Elected Officials

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■ Who We Are

Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) is a national policy, lobbying and promotional organization that serves as the voice of Canadian dairy farmers.

■ How We Share Our Story

Canadian dairy farmers are always open to having discussions with consumers, parliamentarians and others who are interested in talking dairy. Authenticity and honesty are highly valued in communications and who better to tell the dairy farmer story than the ones who live it daily. There are activists who are very involved in social media but farmers are able to counter their declarations by sharing their own genuine stories from inside the sector. When doing so, it is important that farmers know the resources available for their use and adaptation, and utilize numbers from credible sources in order to show consumers the true side of the dairy industry. Another way to communicate successfully is by encouraging farmers to reach out to their networks in local communities – business associates, neighbours, and friends. It's important to keep building a network so that we are able to share our knowledge and set the record straight about our industry, our work, our goals and commitments, our challenges and our successes. DFC and members organizations make these resources readily available for their use at the farm gate, farmers' markets, on their own website or in meetings with parliamentarians.

Good communication is also about portraying consistent messages. From the farmers to the DFC Board of Directors, we say the same message on dairy matters because we tell our story as we live it.

We have a great story to tell, and only through continued best management practices on our farms can we keep the respect and support of Canadian citizens. More consumers want to know where their food comes from and how it was produced. Food safety, quality, animal care and the environment are

factors of growing interest for Canadians. In order to keep up with consumer demands and offset misinformation, DFC – run by farmers, for farmers – continues to develop national standards for good farm practices. Our farmers share photos of their farm and stories about what they do on their farms everyday as well as how our industry contributes to the local economy in all regions. We need to continue maintaining relations with people in our communities and inform them as well as all Canadians and politicians about dairy farming.

Regular meetings with elected officials at all levels (local, provincial, federal) are important to maintain a working relationship and address challenges to continuously improve our industry from local environmental regulations and land use policies to support for supply management to research funding. Dairy farming in Canada is a success story and it will remain that way as long as everyone works together to share the story with consumers and elected officials.



