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Consumers and Dairy Products

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Source: Michael Hutjens (217) 333-2928

URBANA - Consumers can expect the price of milk to increase 30 to 40 cents a gallon, 40 to 60 cents per pound for cheese, and 80 cents to \$1.20 per pound for butter throughout 2007, said a University of Illinois Extension dairy specialist.

"This is due to increases in the prices of corn and feed for dairy cattle, shifting to ethanol production, energy costs, and a shortage of dairy products in the world market," said Mike Hutjens. "These will increase farm prices by four to six cents per pound of milk."

Hutjens' comments came as he reviewed consumer use of dairy products with the approach of June Dairy Month.

The average consumption of all dairy products in the United States in 2005 (the latest year for which statistics are available) was 33 percent as fluid milk, 40 percent as cheese, 13 percent as butter, and 8 percent as frozen dairy product.

Consumption patterns for the average American in 2005 included 32 pounds of cheese, 8.6 pounds of yogurt, 27 pounds of fat-free milk, 81 pounds of reduced-fat milk, 57 pounds of whole milk, 4.4 pounds of sour cream/dips, 14.5 pounds of flavored milk, 26 pounds of ice cream, and 2.6 pounds of cottage cheese.

"Losers among dairy products in 2005 were yogurt, down 6.6 percent; whole milk, down 4.4 percent; and cottage cheese, down 3.7 percent," said Hutjens.

"In 2005, the average consumer spent \$371 on dairy products out of a total of \$5,781 in food purchases--\$3,347 for food at home and \$2,434 for food away from home."

Hispanics invest the most in dairy products at \$425 per person/per capita, he added. The Northeast region of the United States invests the most at \$417 per person.

"School milk consumption was up 6 percent and could increase as more school districts remove soda as a beverage choice," Hutjens said.

Organic milk makes up 1.9 percent of dairy product consumption.

Romania is the world's leader in milk consumption at 365 pounds per person compared to 204 pounds per person in the United States. New Zealanders consume 14 pounds of butter per person compared to 4.6 pounds for U.S. consumers.

"However, the United States leads in cheese consumption at 32 pounds of cheese per person with the European Union second at 29 pounds," he said.

The United States exported \$1.5 billion in dairy products last year, up 11 percent from the previous year, to Mexico, Canada, and Japan as whey proteins and milk powder. The United States imported \$2.6 billion in dairy products last year, up 12 percent from the previous year, primarily as specialty cheese and butter.

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