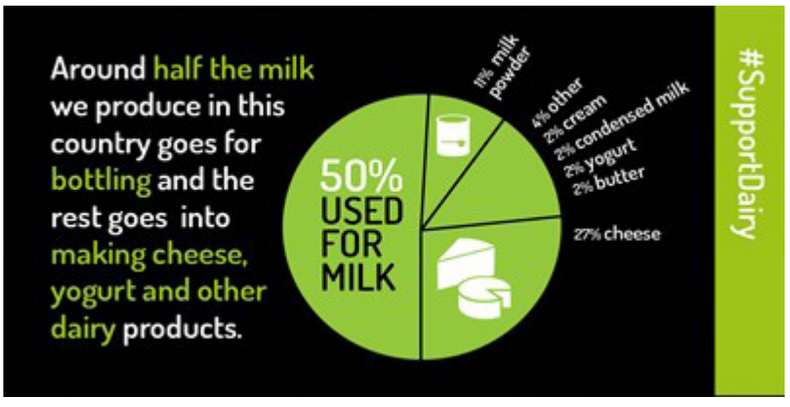
Fact Sheet

British dairy farmers produce around 11 billion litres of milk each year – that's enough to fill around 4500 Olympic size swimming pools.

In Britain, 6914 million litres of liquid milk are sold for drinking and 6072 million litres go into dairy products such as cheese, butter and dried milk powder, which is a vital component of many other food products.

In the UK, we buy around 5.2 billion litres of liquid milk from the supermarkets and the milkman each year.



There are farms of all shapes and sizes in the UK, from small herds to farms with more than 1000 cows, and different farming systems including organic and conventional, grazed and housed.

Data from 2013 shows that the average herd size in Britain is 131 cows (128 in England, 118 in Wales, 187 in Scotland).

The frequency of milking varies from farm to farm and depends on the type of parlour used, the stage of lactation and milk yield. Most farmers milk their cows twice a day, but in a robotic milking system cows sometimes choose to be milked four to five times a day.

A robotic milking parlour is simply a voluntary milking system for cows.

The milking machines connect automatically to the cow's teats and turn off when the milking is complete. A safety mechanism ensures that cows can only be milked for a certain number of times per day, with some cows choosing to be milked four or five times a day.

In a rotary parlour, the cow stands on a circular raised platform allowing the farmer to attach the milking machine from below. The platform rotates very slowly, allowing cows to enter and exit the platform at regular intervals.

Milking in a rotary parlour can be quicker than in herringbone parlours, especially for large farms with big herds.

In a herringbone parlour, the milking machines are positioned in the middle – the 'spine' of the fish – between two aisles with room for the cows. The cows come into the parlour and line up between each 'fish bone', creating two rows of cows.

A special milk tanker calls at a milk farm daily or every other day to collect milk. The driver checks the temperature of the milk before transferring it to his vehicle. The driver also collects samples to test milk quality and transports it to the dairy for processing.

Milk is kept in a milk tank which cools and stores it before it is collected for processing.

A typical tank can hold up to 10 000 litres of milk and keeps the temperature at 4°C (about the same temperature as a fridge) for optimal freshness. The tank is usually made from stainless steel and is cleaned by the farmer after each collection, usually daily.

It is accepted that high levels of greenhouse gases such as methane – which cows emit naturally when they chew and digest food – can contribute to global warming. Dairy farmers have worked hard to reduce their environmental impact. As a result, greenhouse gas emissions from UK dairy farms have declined sharply over the last 20 years, and today represent just 2% of the UK's total emissions. This compares with UK transport, for example, which is responsible for 25%.

http://www.thisisdairyfarming.com/

The **Red Tractor** logo on packaging is a guarantee that the dairy food or drink product you are choosing to buy meets rigorous standards of food safety, environmental protection and animal health and welfare. It is produced on farms that are managed by highly professional, well-qualified and caring stockmen.

The Union Flag in the Red Tractor logo guarantees that the product can be traced back to UK farms. All products carrying the Red Tractor have robust traceability standards and good farming practices behind it. So, when you are next out shopping for your family meals and want peace of mind about the food you are buying and eating, Trust the Tractor to help support great British dairy farming and great food.