

PA Milk Marketing Board
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Dairy Farm Losses – How Does PA Stack Up with Others in the Top 10?
Part 2

Recently I wrote an article that provided some USDA data on the top 10 milk producing states, of which Pennsylvania ranks #7. The point of the article was to illustrate that there doesn't appear to be any negative relationship between milk price regulation at the state level and loss of dairy farms. I used comparative data for 2010 and 2019.

A reader has challenged the source of the data and the comparisons I made, asking that I provide more recent data—specifically, 2017, 2018 and 2019—to better show farm losses for Pennsylvania compared to the other nine in the top 10. This article addresses that request. I will also provide data for Ohio, #11, as we often hear complaints about the lower cost of milk in Ohio in areas close to the western Pennsylvania border.

In the previous article I noted that nine of the top 10 milk producing states lost dairy farms between 2010 and 2019; only three of the top 10 have some form of minimum pricing and New York regulates only maximum retail price. Data analysis showed that PA's percentage loss of dairy farms during the period 2010-2019 is 21.93%, lower than the average for the top 10 states and lower than six states. (I want to note that the previous article contained a typographical error and reported the timeframe as 2015-2019; a correction was provided in a subsequent article.)

The table below provides more recent data for comparison. Data used come from the US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service.

State	# Farms 2017	# Farms 2018	% Loss 17-18	# Farms 2019	% Loss 18-19	% Loss 17-19	Price Regs
Texas	400	400	0.00%	380	5.00%	5.00%	No
New Mexico	150	150	0.00%	140	6.67%	6.67%	No
California	1,390	1,335	3.96%	1,255	5.99%	9.71%	Yes
Idaho	510	480	5.88%	460	4.17%	9.80%	No
Pennsylvania	6,570	6,200	5.63%	5,730	7.58%	12.79%	Yes
New York	4,490	4,190	6.68%	3,880	7.40%	13.59%	Yes*
Minnesota	3,210	2,980	7.17%	2,730	8.39%	14.95%	No
Wisconsin	9,090	8,500	6.49%	7,720	9.18%	15.07%	No
Washington	450	410	8.89%	370	9.76%	17.78%	Yes
Michigan	1,750	1,520	13.14%	1,330	12.50%	24.00%	No
Grand Total	35,685	26,165	5.78%	25,935	7.66%	12.94%	