

West Point Farms  
– Wendell, Idaho



# FAMOUS FOR POTATOES. FAMOUS FOR MILK. IDAHO IS #3 IN U.S. MILK PRODUCTION

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**M**ention Idaho to a non-resident, a common reply is that we're known for our famous potatoes. That's true, of course. In fact, "Famous Potatoes" is a popular state license plate and part of an ongoing state ad campaign. But what you won't hear and which is also true is that Idaho is famous for milk production, with the majority of dairy farms and milk cows coming out of the southern Idaho region. Thanks to the massive amount of milk produced here, Idaho ranks #3 in the country for milk production, #3 in cheese production and puts dairy as the #1 agriculture crop in the state. Cheese and milk production remain a major and growing industry sector in Idaho, largely focused in the south central region of the state known as The Magic Valley.

While Idaho is home to nearly 600 dairy farms and over 500,000 dairy cows, the

majority of both are in southern Idaho. Availability of land, mild climate and nearby access to manufacturers makes southern Idaho the state's leading area for dairy and cheese.

According to Deana Sessions, administrator for Idaho Dairy Products Commission, "Dairy production in southern Idaho has a significant economic impact on the state. With over 9 billion pounds of milk produced in 2010 -- just in southern Idaho's Magic Valley -- the economic value was well over \$1 billion dollars. This small region generates a substantial economic return the whole state enjoys," she said.

### **More Milk Means More Cheese & Dairy Products**

Idaho milk production had grown at a rate of five to seven percent for the 15 years prior to 2009. Since 2009, the

growth rate has slowed, but production is expected to grow at a three to five percent rate for the foreseeable future with most of that growth happening in the Magic Valley.

"Southern Idaho is an ideal location for dairy farming for many reasons," said Tony Vander Hulst, co-owner of West Point Farms in the southern Idaho city of Wendell. "The region provides excellent feed availability for our herd, a generally cool year-round climate keeps the cows happy and production up and good water and land availability makes dairy operations here the best the state has to offer," he said. Vander Hulst also explained that Idaho's dairy feed lot systems also offer year-round consistency in milk production and quality.

West Point Farms, established in 2001, milks over 5,500 cows and sells milk directly to nearby Glanbia Foods,

## CHOBANI YOGURT WILL OPEN \$100 MILLION FACILITY IN SOUTHERN IDAHO

Chobani, the country's #1 selling brand of yogurt, will expand with a second domestic manufacturing plant in Twin Falls, Idaho. The \$100 million high capacity production facility will be housed on 200 acres of agricultural and industrial land. Ground-breaking is slated for December 2011 with operations beginning in 2012. Initially, 400 workers will be hired.

This is significant economic development news for southern Idaho as well as the whole state. "We anticipate Chobani's planned investment to result in an additional \$200 million in regional sales," said Idaho Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter. "Between construction activities, employment at the plant and the sourcing of local supplies like milk, there's no question that the economic effect of Chobani's new site will run deep throughout southern Idaho, benefiting family farms as well as

our dairy and construction industries. We're thrilled Chobani chose Twin Falls as their second home," Otter said.

While Chobani considered other western locations for their facility, southern Idaho was selected because it offered strength in three key areas: western location, large availability of high-quality milk and a strong workforce.

"We visited numerous possible sites over the past several months and met a lot of great people along the way," said Hamdi Ulukaya, CEO and founder of Chobani. "It was a hard decision to make, but in the end, we chose Twin Falls due to its abundant milk supply, skilled labor force and tight knit local community. We're looking forward to starting the next chapter of the Chobani story here in Idaho's Magic Valley."

the world's largest producer of American-style cheddar cheese and the largest cheese manufacturer in the Northwest. With the high quality of milk produced by West Point and the region's hundreds of other dairies, Glanbia generates a staggering 1.1 million pounds of cheese every day in two southern Idaho cheese plants. Glanbia, one of numerous cheese manufacturers in the state, is the major contributor to the almost 832 million pounds of cheese Idaho produces annually.

In addition to southern Idaho's impressive dairy production numbers, cheese making translates into big economic numbers here as well. According to the Idaho Department of Labor's regional economist, Jan Roeser, for every one job created in this industry, another 6.72 are created. "That's a huge multiplier because while products are produced in this region, they are exported domestically and internationally, bringing external money into the region," she explained.

### Processor Advantages

Southern Idaho offers significant advantages to local processors: high milk production level and low population level. That means only a small portion of milk goes directly to consumers leaving millions of pounds of liquid milk available to make cheese and other dairy products.

"Southern Idaho is the ideal location for cheese and dairy production for many reasons," said Jeff Williams, president and CEO of Glanbia Foods. "Thanks to the area's fairly dry, mild climate and dependable crop irrigation, there is an abundance of quality cattle feed allowing dairy farmers to offer us a competitively-priced, high quality milk supply," he said. "Idaho is also

number one in the country for per capita milk production due to the state's small population. Combined, these factors make for a profitable and successful cheese-processing business as we've enjoyed in southern Idaho for the past 20 years."

Other regional cheese processors include: Sorrento Cheese Lactalis in Nampa specializes in Mozzarella Cheese; Jerome Cheese produces Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby and reduced fat varieties; Brewster Cheese in Rupert specializes in Swiss Cheese; and Gossner Foods in Heyburn produces Swiss Cheese and 30 other varieties. Dairygold, Idaho Milk Products and High Desert Milk round out the dairy processing industry in southern Idaho.

### Quality Abounds

Not only does Idaho offer significant volume and consistency of cheese, product quality has been confirmed time and again on the U.S. and international stage.

This past April, Glanbia brought home a record-breaking eleven awards for making some of the best cheeses in America winning from over 1,600 entries representing 30 states while Sorrento Lactalis won Best in Class for Mozzarella and Jerome Cheese took third place for Shredded Whole Milk Mozzarella/Provolone Blend.

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some of the best cheeses in the world competing against 2,300 entries from 20 nations.

Yes, Idaho is famous for potatoes. But famous for milk, cheese and dairy products? Absolutely! 🍌

