

## The many health benefits of dairy

Did you know that humans are the only adult animal species that continues to consume “milk” through dairy products. While most animals wean off of their mother’s milk after infancy, humans across the globe have been consuming products produced by cow, sheep or goat milk for thousands of years. And the benefits can be numerous.

### Human body grows to accept milk

Although dairy doubters are quick to mention that it is not “natural” for humans to consume milk products into adulthood and that the body is not designed to digest the sugars and proteins in dairy, others are saying that centuries of farming have led to the evolution of human genes so that dairy products can be included in the diet.

According to a study published in 2013 in the journal *Nature*, archaeologist Peter Bogucki was excavating a Stone Age site in the fertile plains of central Poland in the 1970s when he came across various artifacts. One seemed to be an early pottery strainer used in cheese-making. The pottery

was studied, and milk proteins were found on it.

As farming replaced hunting and gathering in many areas of the world, it’s surmised that the human body slowly evolved to tolerate milk into adulthood, especially if it was fermented, such as in cheese or yogurt. Several thousand years later, it’s believed that a genetic mutation spread through Europe that gave people the ability to produce lactase — the enzyme necessary to digest the lactose sugar in dairy — and drink milk. Many people who retain the ability to digest milk can trace their ancestry to Europe, according to a group of scientists brought together to work on a multidisciplinary project called LeCHE (Lactase Persistence in the early Cultural History of Europe). There are other dairy pockets from West Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

### Dairy’s present-day benefits

Today we know that dairy is an important source of nutrients at all ages and stages of growth. Southeast United Dairy Industry Association, Inc. says that dairy is a great source of protein, calcium, carbohydrates, phospho-

rus, potassium, and vitamins A, D, B12, riboflavin, and niacin.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says that the calcium in dairy products is used for building bones and teeth and in maintaining bone mass. Diets with sufficient potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Additionally, vitamin D functions in the body to maintain ideal levels of calcium and phosphorous so that bones are built and maintained.

The Australian Dietary Guidelines say that consumption of milk, cheese and yogurt is linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and colorectal cancer.

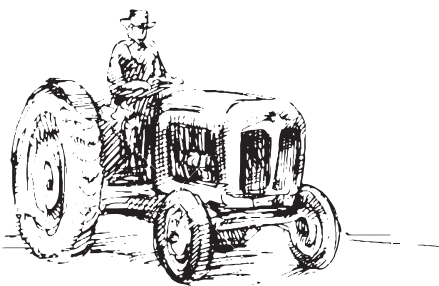
The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage children and adults to enjoy three servings of low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese or yogurt each day. Canada’s Food Guide recommends between three and four servings for children in the preteen and teenage years and two to three servings for adults.

Dairy can be a nutritious part of a healthy diet, and history suggests it has been for quite some time.

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## Walk-In Access generates revenue for landowners

Landowners can generate revenue by allowing public hunting on their private land in 46 Minnesota counties through the Department of Natural Resources Walk-In Access Program. Landowners can sign up for walk-in access through Friday, April 27.

“This program is a win-win for landowners and hunters,” said Scott Roemhildt, DNR Walk-In Access coordinator. “And what’s more, by signing up for three years, landowners can qualify for habitat enhancement on their Walk-In Access acres.”

For Walk-In Access, eligible parcels must be at least 40 acres and covered by high quality natural vegetation. Landowners are paid by the acre to allow hunting access from Sept. 1 to May 31. Bonuses are paid on parcels that enroll in a three-year contract, are more than 140 acres and are located near a state wildlife management area or federal waterfowl production area.

“This may be an opportune time for landowners to sign up for this program because there is some uncertainty about how it will be funded in the 2018 Farm Bill,” Roemhildt said.

In a change this year, landowners who enroll in a three-year

contract also may qualify for up to \$20,000 in habitat enhancements on their land for prescribed burning, removing invasive trees and brush, or planting native species.

Walk-In Access parcels are for public hunting only and no motorized vehicles are allowed on conservation land. Bright yellow-green signs identify area boundaries and parking is along roads or in designated parking areas. Recreational use laws provide extra liability protection for acres enrolled in Walk-In Access.

Walk-In Access began in 2011 and has grown to more than 26,700 acres in 2017. The program is currently funded through 2018 with a three-year grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under number 69-3A75-16-509. Other funding comes through a surcharge on nonresident hunting licenses, a one-time appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature in 2012 and donations from hunters.

Landowners should contact their local soil and water conservation district office for enrollment information. Details can be found at [mndnr.gov/walkin](http://mndnr.gov/walkin).