

How come I only really see black and white cows outside and in barns, and not as many brown cows anymore?

Black and white cows are called Holsteins, one of 6 common breeds of dairy cattle in the US along with Jersey, Brown Swiss, Ayrshire, Guernsey, and Milking Shorthorn. A common brown cow is the Jersey, which is smaller in size and produces a moderate amount of milk that is high in fat and protein. Holsteins are larger and produce much higher volumes of milk with a lower protein and fat content. Dairy producers can have a favorite breed just like you or I may have a favorite breed of dog. Some producers like certain breeds because of the size of their facility (smaller cows like Jerseys will fit in smaller stalls in the barn), the genetics of the cows, how well they breed, or how efficiently they produce milk. Additionally, the milk from specific breeds is better suited to make certain dairy products like different types of cheeses, which can make individual breeds more desirable. Dairy producers get paid based on the amount of milk they ship and the amount of components (fat and protein) in that milk; Holsteins consistently produce some of the highest volumes of milk, thus, they have become the most popular breed in the US.

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