



## Where does my food come from?

By Alyssa Couse, Agricultural Outreach Educator



Great Lakes Cheese demo at 2017 Dairyland Festival

Do brown cows make chocolate milk? Classic.

After helping with several events over the last month such as the Dairyland Festival and Parade, school farm tours, Day on the Farm, etc., I've heard this question at every single event. While some asked the question sarcastically to get a rise out of me, others asked it with sincerity. It made me realize how crucial it is to educate today's consumers about who, what, where, and how the food gets to their table.

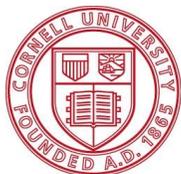
People seem to know that white milk comes from Holsteins, the black and white cows, but there is confusion when it comes to other breeds. Using the same logic that if a cow is brown she should make chocolate milk, this would mean that the milk from Holsteins should be white with black spots. This is clearly not the case! Although the different breeds of dairy cows look very different in size, color, and even personality traits, they all make the same delicious WHITE milk! The top six most common dairy breeds seen in the North Country are Holsteins (black and white), Jersey (brown), Guernsey (reddish/golden brown and white patches), Ayrshire (red and white), Brown Swiss (grayish brown), and Milking Shorthorn (reddish brown and white splotches).

The other dairy products that you enjoy like cheese, yogurt, ice cream, and sour cream are made from milk. Products that are flavored or a color other than white are done so using other ingredients like cocoa, vanilla, food coloring, and fruits. If you are interested in finding out exactly where your dairy product was made, check out <http://whereismymilkfrom.com/>. This website allows you to enter the code on your product's container and find out where the product was distributed from!

It is important for consumers to know where all of their food comes from. While you literally purchase foods from a grocery store or market, it does not simply appear on the sale shelf out of thin air. It could come from a neighbor's garden, a farm a few hours away, or from across the country or even the world!

Realizing that our foods are the result of someone else's hard work is a great message to share with children. Farm tours and field trips help kids see the farm to table connection. By educating our youth we can help create the next generation of educated consumers!

Note: A recent article from the Washington Post discussed the conundrum surrounding chocolate milk and other food misconceptions. To learn more, visit [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/06/15/seven-percent-of-americans-think-chocolate-milk-comes-from-brown-cows-and-thats-not-even-the-scary-part/?utm\\_term=.ab1683e5ff76](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/06/15/seven-percent-of-americans-think-chocolate-milk-comes-from-brown-cows-and-thats-not-even-the-scary-part/?utm_term=.ab1683e5ff76).



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