



# Dairy Products

## Opportunities in Northwest Iowa

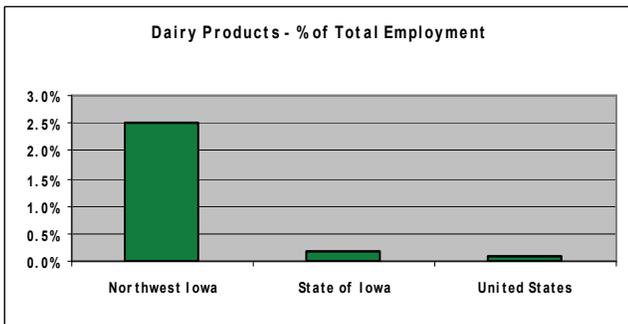


### Background

The Northwest Iowa Region includes six counties - Cherokee, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Plymouth, and Sioux - with a total population of nearly 100,000. The two primary industry sectors in the region are Manufacturing and Agriculture, and these sectors account for 27.4% of the total employment in the Region compared to 16.2% for these sectors in the State of Iowa and 9.1% for the U.S.

### Dairy Products Industry

Nearly 1,700 workers in Northwest Iowa are employed in the Dairy Products Industry. As a percentage of total employment, the Dairy Products Industry represents a significantly greater percentage of the employment in our Region than is represented in the State of Iowa and the nation.



### Benefits of Northwest Iowa for Dairy Products Companies

- Access to a large concentration of dairy farms
- Excellent highway systems
- Strong Transportation and Warehousing Sector
- Affordable skilled workforce
- Quality training programs and educational systems

Dairy product production in this region includes fluid, dry, condensed and evaporated milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, ice milk, and sherbet. The leading dairy products companies in Northwest Iowa are:

- Wells Dairy
- Dean Foods
- Associated Milk Producers
- Agropur

### Dairy Farms

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2007 Census, there are 204 farms in the six counties that have a total of 45,670 milk cows. Dairy farm owners in the Region have expressed to Northwest Iowa Development their interest and capability to expand their operations to meet the needs of companies in the Region as well as with companies that would locate a new dairy products operation in the Region. Over 20% of the nation's milk cows are located within a day's drive from Northwest Iowa.

### Transportation and Logistics

Excellent highway systems are important for dairy products, and Northwest Iowa offers easy 4-lane access to two east-west Interstates (I-90 and I-80) and two north-south Interstates (I-29 and I-35).

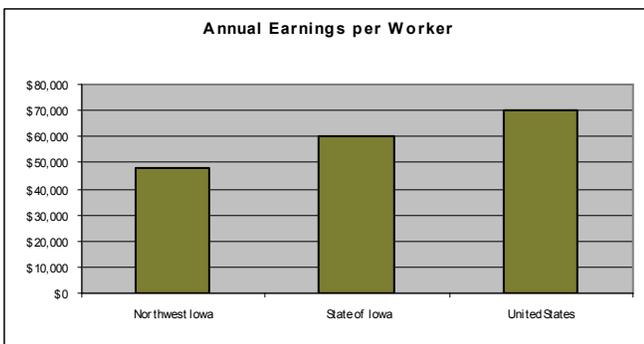


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The Transportation and Warehousing Sector accounts for 5.2% of our Region's employment (nearly 3,500 workers) compared to 3.9% for the State of Iowa and 3.6% for the U.S. There are over 200 truck transportation companies and 28 warehousing and storage operations located in our six counties.

### Skilled Workforce

Studies have shown Iowa to have a highly skilled workforce, and nearly 10,000 workers in our Region are employed in the Manufacturing Sector. The earnings of our manufacturing workers (\$47,776) are 21% below the earnings for manufacturing workers in Iowa and 32% below the average for all U.S. manufacturing workers.



The low cost-of-living in Northwest Iowa allows our workers to enjoy a high quality-of-life, while enabling employers to hire productive workers at an affordable wage.

### Education and Training

Education is one of the key strengths of the Region and the State of Iowa. Annually, Iowa is one of the nation's leaders in scores on ACT and SAT college entrance examinations. Two of the school systems in Northwest Iowa (George-Little Rock and Sheldon Community Schools) have been named to the Top 100 Schools list compiled by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Two community colleges in the Region offer programs to prepare students for careers in manufacturing and other industries - Northwest Iowa Community

College in Sheldon and Western Iowa Tech in Cherokee. In addition, there are four-year private institutions in the Region - Northwestern College and Dordt College - that educate students for careers with area employers. Both these colleges have been named among America's Best Colleges by *U.S. News and World Report*.

The Iowa New Jobs Training Program provides employers, which are expanding their existing operation in Iowa or are locating a new operation to the State, with employee training. This training is customized to meet the employer's needs and is available through Iowa's community colleges.

### Quality-of-Life

From nationally-recognized schools to the many recreational outlets, Northwest Iowa is a terrific place to live and work. Our residents enjoy boating, swimming, hunting, and taking in the historic and cultural attractions. We celebrate Dutch heritage with the annual Tulip Festival in Orange City, which includes parades, dancing, and plenty of tulips. Our love of ice cream is on display each year at the LeMars Ice Cream Days. In addition, our Region offers a relatively low cost-of-living and very affordable housing.



### Northwest Iowa Development

Economic developers from the six counties in the northwest corner of Iowa have joined together to form Northwest Iowa Development. Through this regional economic development organization, we are able to provide a unified, regionally-targeted approach to developing and marketing the Region to attract quality new corporate locations as well as assist the employers in Northwest Iowa in their expansions. In addition, we are dedicated to developing and attracting the skilled workers needed by our employers.