Agriculture works hard for Monroe County every day. Family-owned farms, food processors and agriculture-related businesses generate thousands of jobs and millions of dollars of economic activity while contributing to local income and tax revenues.

Monroe County agriculture is as diverse as its soil. Cranberry marshes cover the low-lying sandy soils in the northeast. Dairy and beef operations dot the silt and clay loam soils in the ridges and valleys of the county’s central and southern areas. And cash grain and diversified farms can be found throughout.

Located in west-central Wisconsin, Monroe County is home to about 1,926 farms, with an average size of 175 acres. Dairy, cranberries, beef, and cash grain are the counties top revenue producers. Monroe County ranks second in the state in cranberry production and in the top 20 in dairy, beef and forage production. It is home to many fresh-market fruit, vegetable and nursery growers as well as a number of organic farms.

Who owns the farms?

- 90.2% Individuals or families
- 5.3% Family partnerships
- 3.1% Family-owned corporations
- 1.5% Non-family corporations and other

How important is agriculture?

- Agriculture provides jobs for 4,662 Monroe County residents.
- Agriculture accounts for $1.05 billion in economic activity.
- Agriculture contributes $279 million to the county’s total income.
- Agriculture pays $11.6 million in taxes. This figure does not include all property taxes paid to local schools.
Agriculture provides 19% of Monroe County’s jobs

Monroe County agriculture provides 4,662 jobs, or 18.7 percent, of the county’s workforce of 24,954. Production jobs include farm owners and managers and farm employees. Agricultural service jobs include veterinarians, crop and livestock consultants, feed suppliers, farm machinery dealers, barn builders, and agricultural lenders. Processing jobs include those employed in food processing and other value-added industries that support food processors. Every job in agriculture generates an additional 0.53 jobs in the county.

Agriculture contributes $279 million to county income

Monroe County agriculture accounts for $279.1 million, or 15.6 percent, of the county’s total income. This includes wages, salaries, benefits, and profits of farmers and workers in agriculture-related businesses. Every dollar of agricultural income generates an additional 0.69 of county income.

Agriculture pumps $1.05 billion into local economy

Monroe County agriculture generates $1.05 billion in economic activity, about 28 percent of the county’s total economic activity. Every dollar of sales from agricultural products generates an additional $0.28 of economic activity in other parts of the county’s economy.

*Here’s how agriculture stimulates economic activity:*

- The direct effect of agriculture equals $824.2 million and includes the sale of farm products and value-added products.
- Purchases of agricultural and food-processing inputs, services and equipment add another $171.0 million in economic activity. For example, this includes business-to-business purchases of fuel, seed, fertilizer, feed and farm machinery, as well as veterinary services, crop and livestock consultants and equipment leasing.
- This business-to-business activity then generates another $57.8 million in economic activity when people who work in agriculture-related businesses spend their earnings in the local economy.

**Table 1. Taxes paid by agriculture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales tax</td>
<td>$2.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income tax</td>
<td>$4.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property tax</td>
<td>$2.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$2.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11.6 million</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Monroe County’s top commodities (sales by dollar value, 2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>$87.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits &amp; berries</td>
<td>$44.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain</td>
<td>$41.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle &amp; calves</td>
<td>$21.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other crops &amp; hay</td>
<td>$34.0 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agriculture pays $11.6 million in taxes

Economic activity associated with Monroe County farms and agriculture-related businesses generates $11.6 million in local and state taxes. This figure does not include all property taxes paid to support local schools. If it did, the number would increase dramatically.

Dairy is a key Monroe County industry

Dairy farming is the major agricultural industry in Monroe County. On-farm production and milk sales account for $123.8 million. Processing milk into dairy products generates another $510.8 million.

- Seven plants process dairy products in Monroe County.
- On-farm milk production accounts for 934 jobs, and dairy processing accounts for 1,144 jobs.
- At the county level, each dairy cow generates $4,165 in on-farm sales to producers.
- At the state level, each dairy cow generates over $34,000 in total sales.