

The History of the Dairy Industry in Huntington Township

My name is Clayton Lamb, I am 17 years old, and I live in Huntington Township, where my family and I operate a small family dairy farm. My essay is on the history of the dairy industry in Huntington Township.

I am going to start by giving you some facts about the dairy industry as a whole to put everything in perspective. The U.S. produces about 208 billion pounds of milk per year, which is about fifteen percent of the world's milk supply, even though U.S. dairy cattle only account for about one percent of the world's dairy cows. Today there are about 9.4 million dairy cows in the U.S., whereas in the late 1800s there were about 11.2 million. Comparatively, there are only about 262,000 cows in Ohio now, when in the late 1800s there were 782,000. In 2017 Ohio ranked 11th for milk production in the U.S., with 5.4 billion pounds of milk produced, and 10th in cheese production. As you can see the dairy industry is still quite large, but it is not to the scale that it once was.

Dairy cattle have been being milked in Huntington Township since people settled here. In the 1800s almost every family owned at least one cow, but by the mid 1800s many family farms had grown to the point that they needed a bigger market for their milk besides the neighbor down the road. One man in particular noticed this, and his name was C.W. Horr. C.W. Horr and his brother J.C. Horr built the first cheese house in Huntington Township in 1866. They used the milk from about 1,000 cows throughout the township. After the cheese was made it was taken to Wellington to be shipped away by rail. This played a large part in making Wellington the cheese capital of the world. The Horr brother's first cheese house was so successful that more cheese houses were built. At one point there were half a dozen cheese houses in the township. The official Ag statistics for 1878 stated that 698,835 pounds of cheese and 28,843 pounds of butter were processed in Huntington Township for that year. At one point the Horr brothers owned over 40 cheese houses throughout the state, but by 1912 they had closed their last one. This was due to the invention of the refrigerated railroad car, which made it possible to transport fluid milk farther. At the peak of Huntington's Dairy Industry, there may have been more cows than people in the township. Now there are fewer cows and even fewer dairy farms. The trend towards large-scale factories has even affected the farming industry, which in turn has affected the culture and landscape of Huntington Township.