First 'dairy sustainability' report looks at greenhouse gases

February 11, 2011

The U.S. dairy industry has published its first "sustainability progress report."

The average carbon footprint of a gallon of U.S. milk, measured from a dairy farm to a consumer's kitchen table, is 17.6 pounds of carbon dioxide equivalents, according to the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. The industry wants to make dairying more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. A dairy industry goal is byb 2020 to cut by 25 percent greenhouse gas emissions that producing, processing and transporting a gallon of milk creates. The "total fluid milk carbon footprint" of the U.S. dairy industry at roughly 35 million metric tons, about two percent of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Using best management practices makes the greatest difference in the amount of greenhouse gases produced.