Celebrate National Dairy Month in June
Milk and Dairy Products among Maryland's Top Three Agricultural Commodities

ANNAPOLIS, MD (June 8, 2010) – The Maryland Department of Agriculture encourages all Marylanders to celebrate National Dairy Month by enjoying healthy and nutritious dairy products this month, and all year long. As Maryland's third largest agricultural commodity, milk and dairy products accounted for more than $194 million in farm receipts in 2008. National Dairy Month celebrates the value of milk and dairy products as part of well-balanced diets of every American, well as the importance of milk production to the agricultural industry.

"Dairy farming is a vital part of Maryland's agriculture," said Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance. "These farms are associated with a quarter million acres of open, productive farmland and provide us with milk, ice cream, yogurt, cheese and many other nutritious foods. The O'Malley Administration is committed to keeping family farms profitable, which helps to keep Maryland smart, green and growing. I encourage Marylanders to support our dairy farmers."

June Dairy Month was established in 1937 and initially supported by the National Dairy Council to celebrate the dairy industry and to help stabilize dairy demand during periods of peak production. Originally called National Milk Month, the celebration is now led by the American Dairy Association and has broadened over the years to promote the greater use of dairy products through sales promotion programs and marketing campaigns.

Maryland Dairy Facts

- Milk and dairy products accounted for $194.2 million in Maryland's farm receipts in 2008, representing 10 percent of total farm receipts.
- In 2008, Maryland dairy farms produced 1.03 billion pounds of milk; that's about 23 gallons for each of the state's 5.5 million residents.
- As of April 2010, Maryland had 528 dairy farms.
- There are 56,000 milk cows in Maryland; each produces approximately 18,000 pounds of milk per year.
- Frederick, Washington, and Carroll counties are the top three dairy producing areas accounting for 62 percent of Maryland's milk production in 2008.
- Maryland dairies are diversifying and expanding on-farm dairy processing thanks to market demand for locally raised and made products such as bottled milk, cheese, ice cream and yogurt. There are now eight farms licensed to process milk products in Maryland and 10 more farms that have applied for permits to process milk.
- Legislation in 2008 and 2009 allowing for the expansion of value added products to include farmstead cheese (raw milk cheese) to be made on the farm. Today, there is one farm licensed to make farmstead cheese and three additional Maryland farms that will be making farmstead cheese by the end of this year.

Celebrate National Dairy Month at home with homemade ice cream made with locally-grown products. The following recipe is courtesy of Lucie Snodgrass, author of Dishing Up Maryland.

Red Raspberry Ice Cream

3 cups milk
3 eggs, beaten
2 cups sugar

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
5 cups raspberries
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 quart half-and-half
1 pint heavy cream

1. Mix the milk and eggs together in a large saucepan. Stir together the sugar, flour, and salt in a medium bowl, and then add to the milk mixture. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens to a soft custard. Remove from the heat and chill. Meanwhile combine the raspberries and lemon juice in a food processor or blender and puree until smooth.

2. Add the half-and-half and heavy cream to the chilled custard. Stir in the pureed raspberries and pour the custard into the bowl of an ice cream maker. Freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Makes about 3 quarts.