



Opportunities & Challenges in Accurate Milk Recording in the U.S.

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Topics for Discussion

1

The Changing U.S. Dairy Landscape

2

Example of Dairy Herd & Milk Recording Evolution

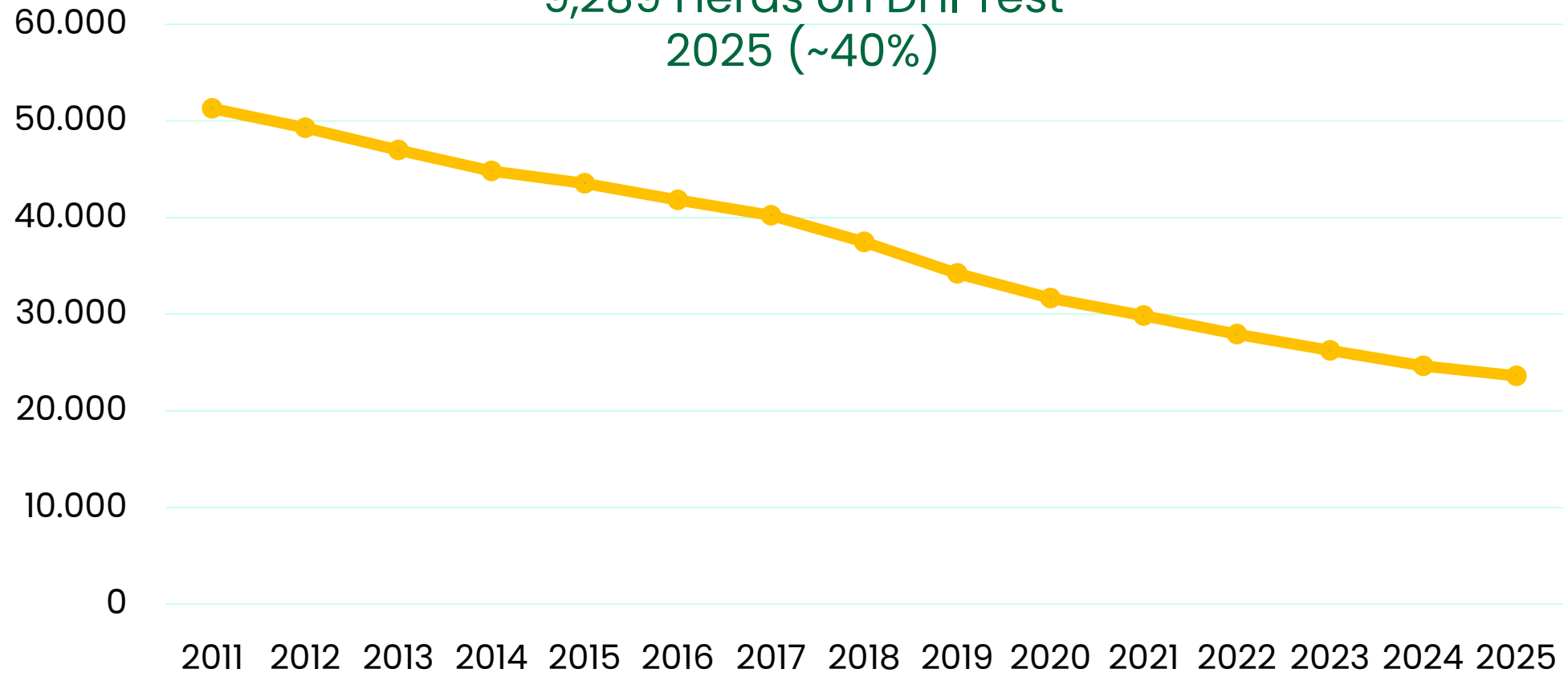
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Opportunities



Licensed Dairy Herds

9,289 Herds on DHI Test
2025 (~40%)

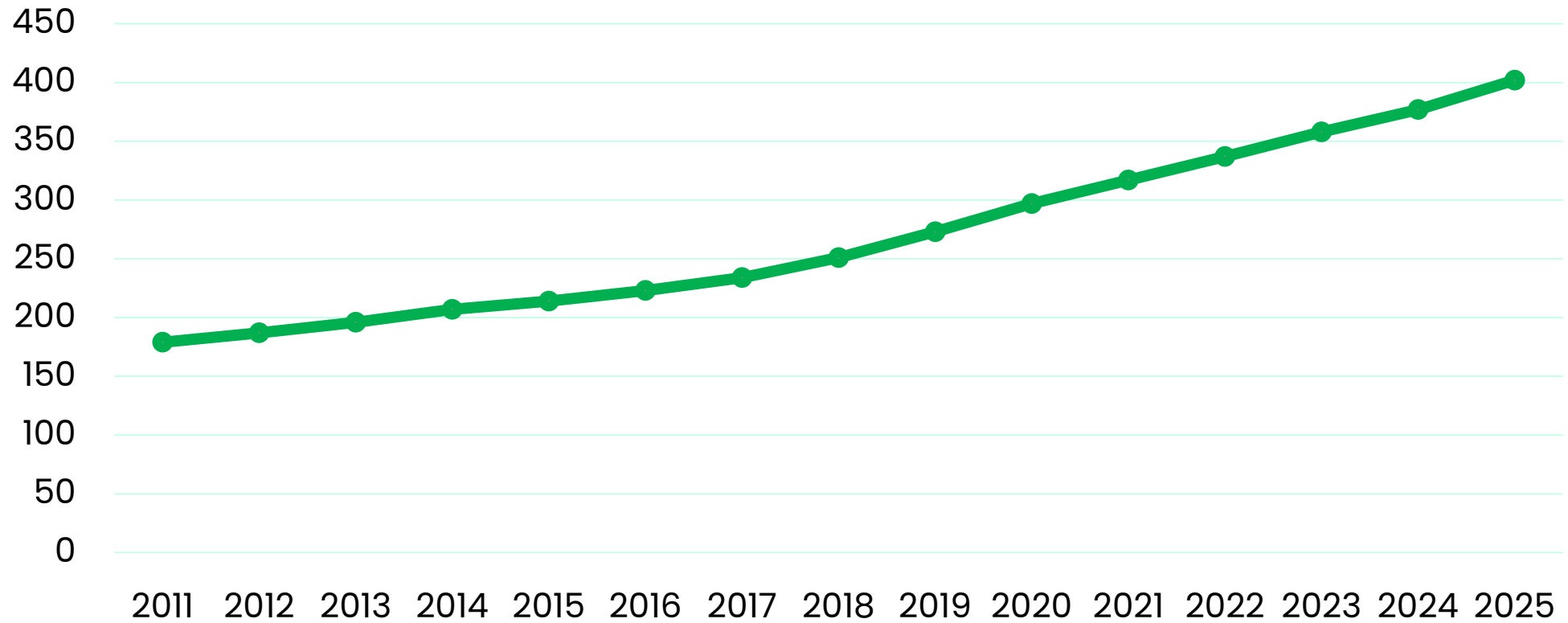


“2025 U.S. Dairy Statistics”. Progressive Dairy. Accessed 5/25/26.
<https://www.progressivepublish.com/downloads/2026/general/2025-pd-stats-lowres.pdf>

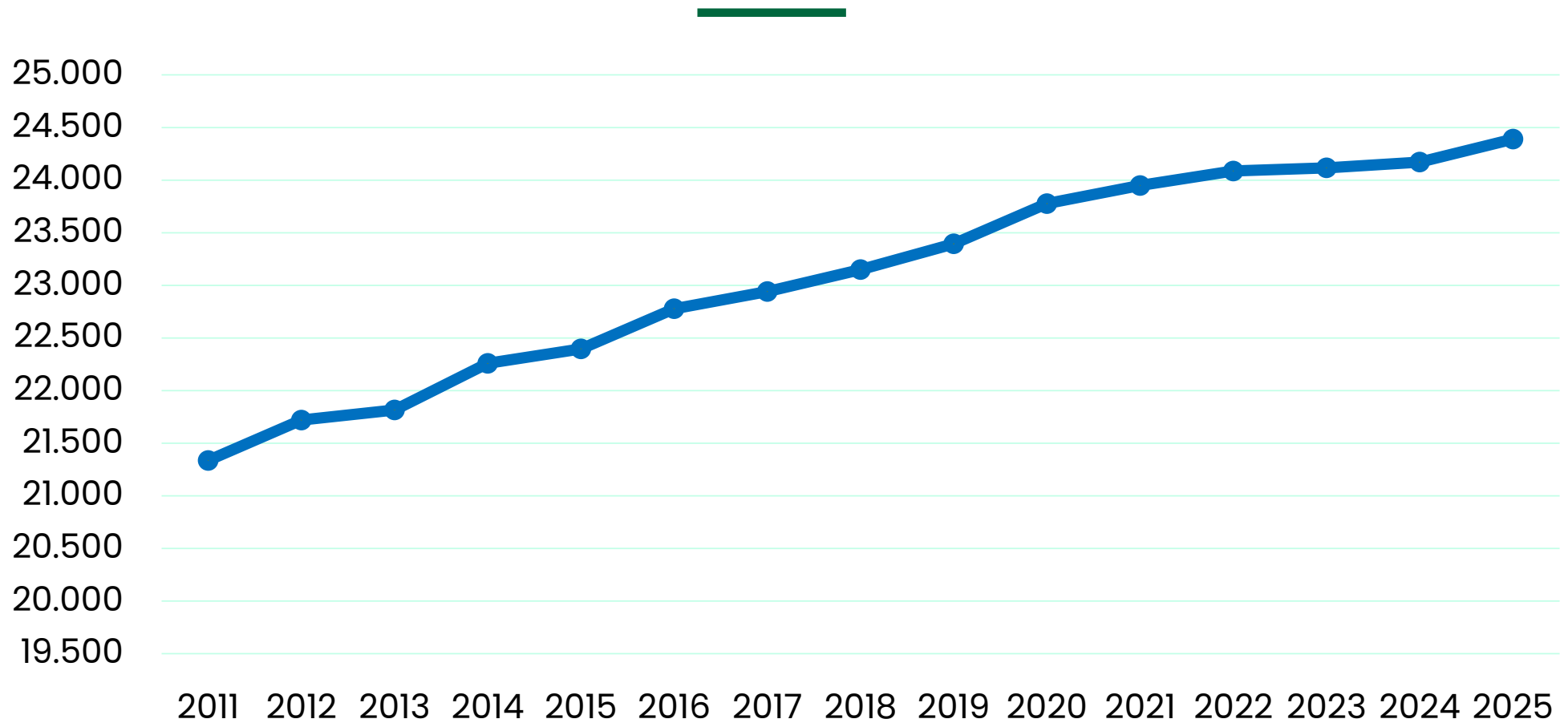


Average Herd Size

Range: 5 – 100,000 cows



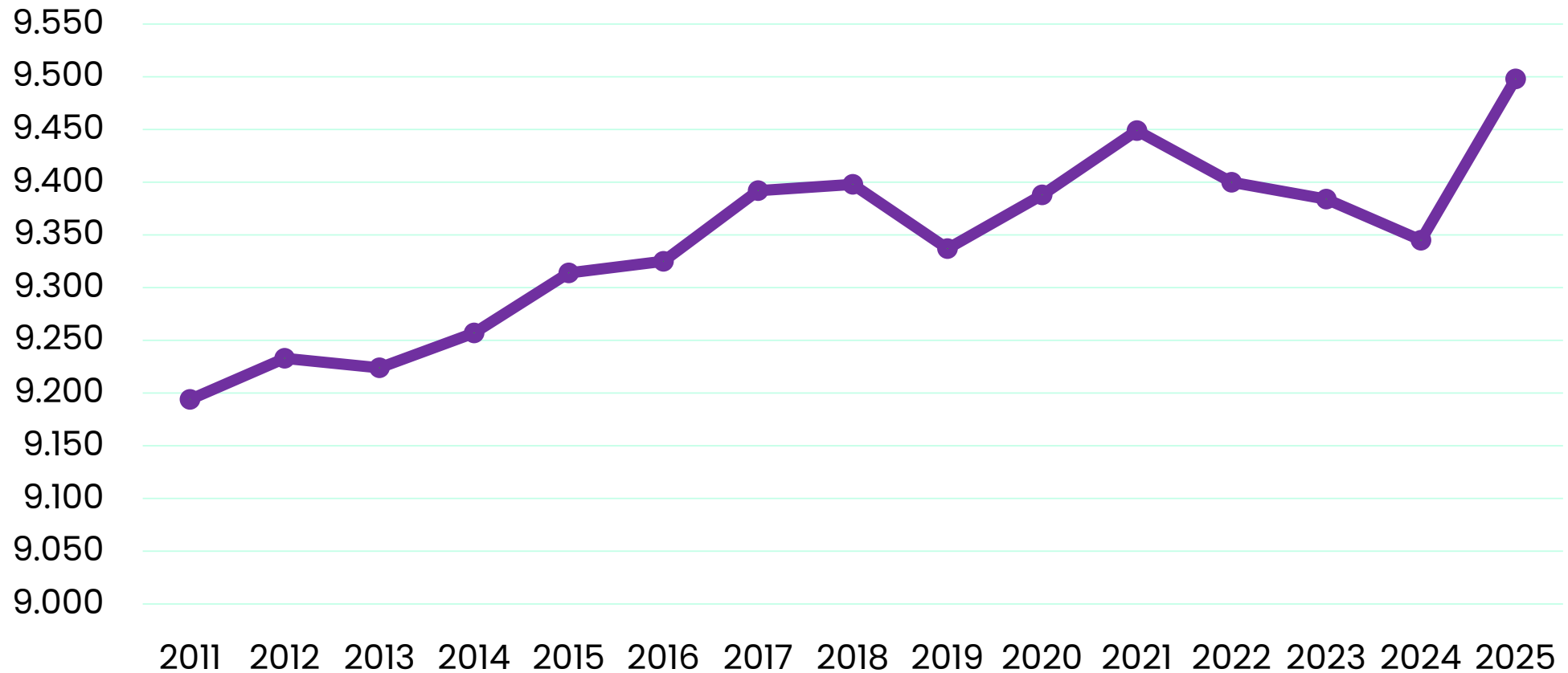
Milk per Cow (lbs per year)



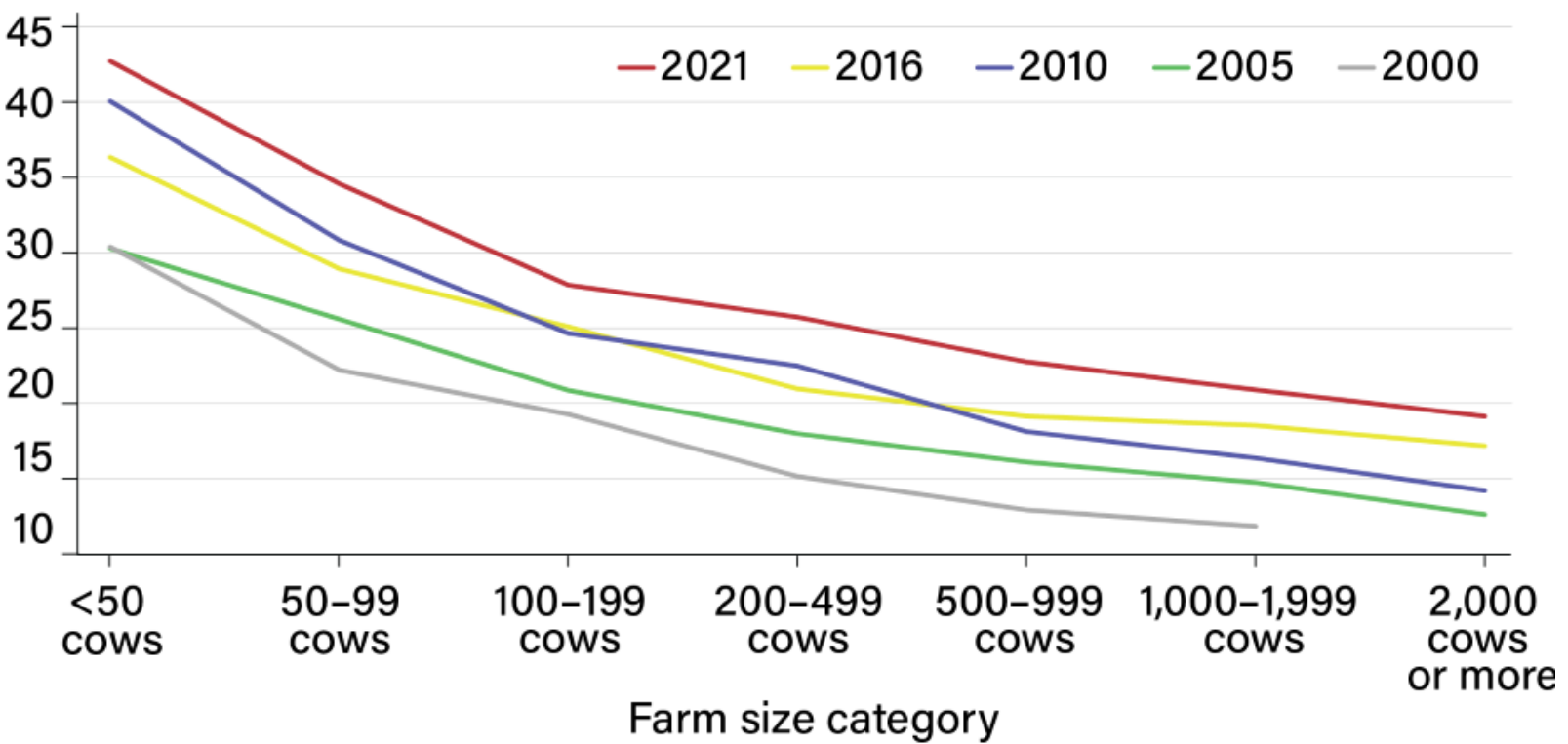
"2025 U.S. Dairy Statistics". Progressive Dairy. Accessed 5/25/26.
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Number of Cows (thousands)



U.S. dollars



Avg cost of producing 100 lbs of milk inversely proportional to herd size

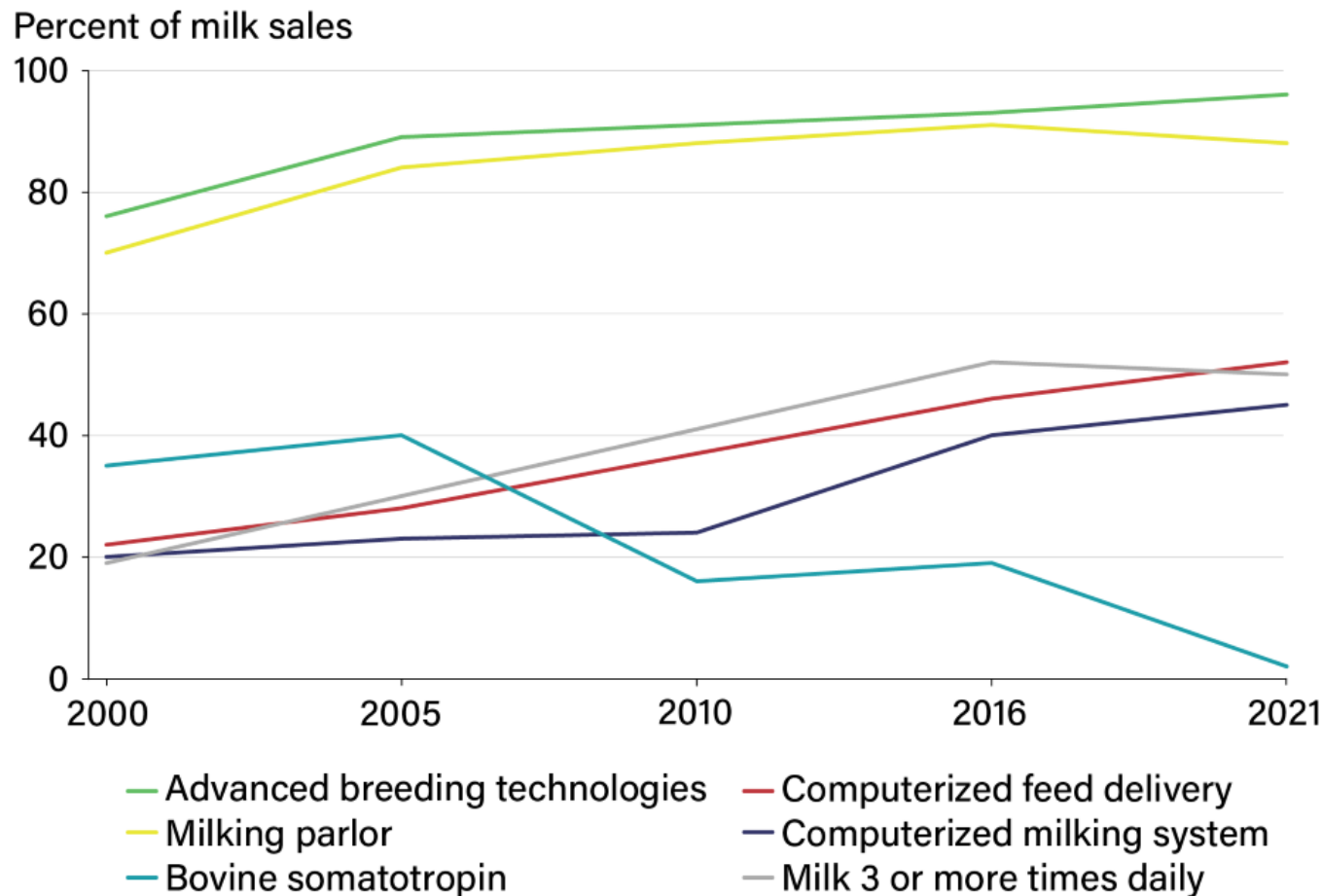
Note: Values are not adjusted for inflation. For 2000, the categories for 1,000-1,999 cows and 2,000 cows were combined into a single category that includes 1,000 cows or more.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) based on the 2000, 2005, 2010, 2016, and 2021 Agricultural Resource Management Survey dairy versions, jointly administered by USDA, ERS and USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service.

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2026/february/fewer-farms-more-milk-the-changing-structure-and-costs-of-us-dairy-farming>



Survey of Farmer-Reported Technology Use



- Nearly all herds use advanced breeding technologies
- Most herds use a milking parlor (variable technology)
- Herds using computerized feed delivery systems increased >20%
- ~40% of herds used computerized milking system
- ~ 50% of herds milk 3X or more



Variability in U.S. Technology Adoption

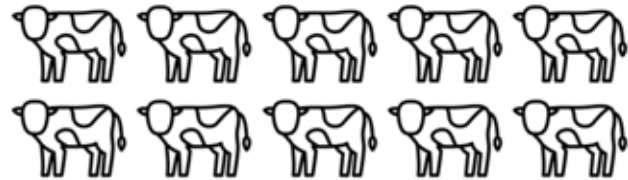
Example: Amish/Mennonite communities



- Traditional, Anabaptist Christian church fellowships that live somewhat separately from surrounding population
- Known for simple living, self sufficiency, and resistance to conveniences of modern technologies
- No exact census but estimated ~10,000 Amish dairy farms in U.S.

Not only is there massive variability in farm demographics, but there is increasing consolidation of farms across different demographics

A hypothetical example



Milks ~**100** cows in a
traditional tie-stall
barn



A hypothetical example



Milks ~**40** cows in a traditional tie-stall barn, 2X, on DHI testing



Milks ~**60** cows by robotic milking system, 1-6X, does not test, meters not ICAR certified



A hypothetical example

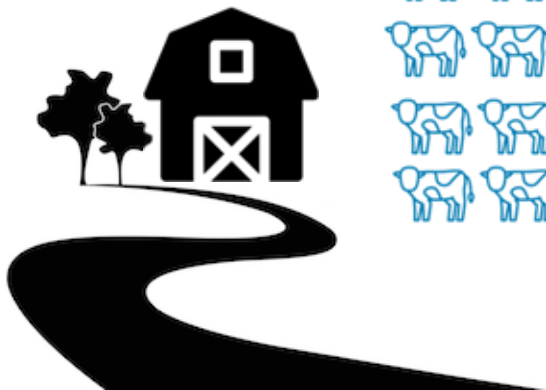
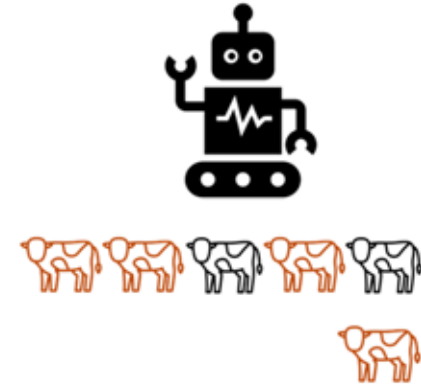


Milks ~**40** cows in a traditional tie-stall barn

Milks ~**60** cows by robotic milking system

A hypothetical example

Milks ~**1000** cows in a rotary parlor, 2X, except fresh cows are 3X, on DHI testing



A hypothetical example

Tie stall barn becomes
hospital pen.
Only tests herd when high
SCC, 3-4X per year



We need solutions for all farm types

Key Areas that Need Focus

- Animal ID
- Data accuracy and flow
 - Automated data entry vs. handwritten
 - Especially important with diagnostics
- Make testing easier and more efficient
 - Especially concerning labor
- Farmer outreach and education
 - Value of milk recording programs



Thank You.

Questions?



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