

Dairy (Grazing) Planning Budget

Using this planning budget, dairy farmers may estimate their costs and returns for 2026. Table 1 presents estimates for a 150-cow rotational grazing dairy (replacements raised on farm) in Missouri. Assumptions were based on price forecasts as of October 2025. Detailed inputs, feed requirements and investments are summarized in Tables 2, 3 and 4. The production practices used to develop these cost estimates are common for Missouri grazing dairies. Use the “Your estimate” column to plan your operation’s costs and returns for 2026.

Table 1. Missouri dairy (grazing) planning budget for 2026.

	11,000 pounds milk sold		14,000 pounds milk sold		Your estimate
	Dollars per cow	Dollars per cwt	Dollars per cow	Dollars per cwt	
Income					
Milk sales	2,200.05	20.00	2,800.06	20.00	
Government payments	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Calf sales	511.00	4.65	511.00	3.65	
Cull cow sales	277.20	2.52	277.20	1.98	
Total income	2,988.25	27.17	3,588.26	25.63	
Operating costs					
Feed	977.57	8.89	1,183.12	8.45	
Labor	506.00	4.60	506.00	3.61	
Veterinary and supplies	120.00	1.09	130.00	0.93	
Utilities	65.00	0.59	65.00	0.46	
Fuel and oil	70.00	0.64	75.00	0.54	
Milk hauling and promotion	148.50	1.35	189.00	1.35	
Building and equipment repair	150.22	1.37	150.22	1.07	
Breeding/genetic charges	46.80	0.43	46.80	0.33	
Professional fees (legal, accounting, etc.)	22.00	0.20	22.00	0.16	
Government program and miscellaneous	41.50	0.38	46.00	0.33	
Operating interest	75.19	0.68	83.34	0.60	
Total operating costs	2,297.79	20.89	2,571.49	18.37	
Ownership costs					
Depreciation on buildings and equipment	170.67	1.55	170.67	1.22	
Interest on land, buildings and equipment	464.18	4.22	464.18	3.32	
Interest on breeding stock	203.00	1.85	203.00	1.45	
Insurance/taxes on capital items	83.33	0.76	83.33	0.60	
Total ownership costs	921.18	8.37	921.18	6.58	
Total costs	3,218.96	29.26	3,492.66	24.95	
Income over operating costs	690.46	6.28	1,016.77	7.26	
Income over total costs	-230.72	-2.10	95.60	0.68	

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding. Abbreviations: cwt = hundredweight.

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Table 2. Input assumptions used in dairy (grazing) planning budget for 2026.

Selected input quantities	Quantity	Selected input prices	Dollars per unit
Cull cow sale weight, pounds	1,100	Cull cow sale price, per hundredweight	140.00
Labor, hours per cow	23	Labor wage, per hour	22.00
Calf crop, percent	95	Average bull calf sale price, per head	712.50
Heifer replacement, percent	20	Average heifer calf sale price, per head	627.50
Operating interest, annual percentage	7.25	Milk price, per hundredweight	20.00

Table 3. Feed requirements in dairy (grazing) planning budget for 2026, on a per cow basis.

Feed description	Dollars per unit	11,000 pounds milk sold		14,000 pounds milk sold	
		Pounds	Dollars	Pounds	Dollars
Pasture (intensive dairy), dry matter per ton	100.00	7,980	399.00	8,302	415.12
Corn silage, per ton	42.00	1,412	29.66	1,412	29.66
Corn, cracked, per bushel	4.78	910	77.68	2,017	172.14
Soybean hulls, per ton	125.00	970	60.61	1,760	110.02
Distillers grain, dry, per ton	175.00	791	69.17	1,265	110.67
Grass hay, per ton	90.00	702	31.58	792	35.63
Minerals/vitamins, per ton	1,000.00	186	93.08	186	93.08
Total lactating and dry cow feed cost			760.77		966.31
Replacement heifer feed and forage cost ¹			216.81		216.81
Total feed cost per cow			977.57		1,183.12

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding.

1. Total replacement heifer (0 to 24 months) feed cost is \$1,084.03 and was adjusted to 20% heifer replacement rate.

Table 4. Investment assumptions in dairy (grazing) planning budget for 2026.

Description	Total dollars	Dollars per cow ¹
Land	1,000,000	5,556
Working facility	15,000	83
Feed storage	15,000	83
Milking parlor (double 12 swing)	192,000	1,067
Manure storage system	50,000	278
Breeding herd (cows)	504,000	2,800
Rolling equipment	80,000	444
Total	1,856,000	10,311

Totals may not sum due to rounding.

1. Represents total cows in herd.

Farmers can customize this budget using the [Missouri Dairy Budgets workbook \(XLSX\)](https://www.missouri.edu/media/wysiwyg/Extensiondata/Pro/AgBusinessPolicyExtension/Docs/dairy-budgets.xlsx) (extension.missouri.edu/media/wysiwyg/Extensiondata/Pro/AgBusinessPolicyExtension/Docs/dairy-budgets.xlsx).



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