Strange dairy discoveries

Eleven researched stories, each tied to a source.

The dairy cow is easy to take for granted. Look a little closer, and the official record is much stranger. These are not legends. Where a later "currently" belongs to an official article rather than a 2026 census, this sheet says so.

1. The word vaccination comes from a cow

In 1796 Edward Jenner used a lancet to introduce fluid from a cowpox sore through a person's skin, to inoculate them against smallpox. He called the method vaccination, from *vacca*, the Latin word for cow. The Science Museum Group names the milkmaid Sarah Nelmes and the boy James Phipps, later found to be immune. Source: Science Museum Group, Jenner's lancets (A600034) and Jenner person record.

2. Three golden Guernseys sailed to Antarctica

Admiral Byrd took Klondike Gay Nira, Deerfoot Guernsey Maid and Foremost Southern Girl on his second expedition, 1933–1935, arriving on the SS *Jacob Ruppert*. A calf, Iceberg, was born just north of the Antarctic Circle. Edgar Cox of Arcade, New York, lived with them in a purpose-built barn. The Polar Curator records fresh milk as Byrd's explanation, and publicity as the "real reason." Source: Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center, "First Milkman in Antarctica."

3. A cream separator that works like a blood test

The Science Museum Group explains a 1938 Alfa-Laval cream separator by comparing it to a laboratory centrifuge that separates red cells from plasma. Karl Gustaf Patrik de Laval, in the museum's short biography, developed steam turbines and dairying equipment. Source: Science Museum Group, object 1938-580 and de Laval person record.

4. A milking machine from about 1890

The Science Museum Group holds an early Murchland milking unit, object 1970-178, dated about 1890, with two sets of four teat cups and three-way air taps. The catalogue does not call it the first milking machine in the world. Source: Science Museum Group, object 1970-178.

5. A mermaid, a merman, and a lady holding a jug

The Royal Dairy, just east of Frogmore House in Windsor Home Park, was built under Prince Albert's personal direction in 1848. The creamery is 40 feet by 20. Settling pans were kept cool by water from three fountains running under the marble trestle tops. Source: royal.uk, "Secrets of the Royal Dairy revealed for Countryfile."

6. Pretty Polly, a gift of 1871

The same official article says many of the Windsor herd descend from the Pretty Polly bloodline, which dates back to 1871, when they were given to Queen Victoria as a present. Source: royal.uk, as above.

7. Over two years old, with offspring

In *Agriculture in the United Kingdom 2025*, "Dairy cows are defined as female dairy cows over 2 years old with offspring." That wording belongs to that chapter, and is not automatically applied to England's 2026 table. Source: AUK 2025, Chapter 2.

8. A tracing system, not a sample

England's release for 1 June 2026 takes cattle figures from the Cattle Tracing System, including all holdings with cattle, so they are "not subject to survey error." Other livestock in the same publication come from a survey of commercial holdings. Source: Livestock populations in England at 1 June 2026.

9. 1933: the Milk Marketing Board, as a film archive tells it

A Museum of English Rural Life catalogue records "1933 Milk Marketing Board set up," and that it was set up in 1933 by farmers to represent their interests. The Agricultural Marketing Act 1933 belongs to the same year; this sheet does not treat that Act as a substitute for the Board's own founding scheme. Sources: MERL, SR MMB PH6; legislation.gov.uk.

10. Drinka Pinta Milka Day

The same MERL catalogue, describing a 1965 Milk Marketing Board advertising film, notes supermarket shots and the line "Drinka Pinta Milka day." A later entry mentions a 1980s advertisement, "Gotta Lotta Bottle." Source: MERL, SR MMB PH6.

11. "The cow ends up floating"

A royal.uk article written for the 65th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation described a Windsor herd of 165 Jersey cows, two milking robots, and waterbeds on which, the farm manager said, "the cow ends up floating." Those "currently" details are dated to that article, not to a 2026 census. Source: royal.uk, as above.

ReallyByte — Fun. Educational. Useless. typographic sheet, no photographs. Read the stories, and the places where official wording must be kept apart, at dairy-cows.farmyard.im. Checked 17 November 2026.