

DAIRYBUSINESS

Research shows students receptive to lower-calorie flavored milk

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School children showed a favorable response to lower-calorie flavored milk products, according to research funded by the Dairy Research Institute®, which is primarily funded by the dairy checkoff program.

The study demonstrated that elementary students who consumed reformulated flavored milk, which contained less than or equal to 150 calories (8-ounce serving), were as likely to drink most of their milk as students who were provided flavored milk containing slightly more calories and sugar. These findings, published in January's *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, highlight the industry's ongoing efforts to provide innovative products that meet children's taste requirements, while satisfying increasingly stringent school nutrition guidelines.

"This study is yet another example of the dairy checkoff's long-term commitment to children's health and wellness," said Paul Rovey, Arizona dairy producer and chair of Dairy Management Inc.™, which manages the national dairy checkoff. "A growing number of schools are calling for the reduction of sugar content on their menus. This creates an opportunity for the dairy industry to share its efforts that have led to flavored milk innovation featuring a reduction in fat, calories and added sugars."

Since 2006, added sugars in flavored milk offered in schools have been reduced by 38 percent. In fact, most flavored milk served in schools this year has an average of 134 calories, while still providing kid-approved taste needs and the same nine essential nutrients as white milk. All milk, including flavored milk, plays a vital role in helping Americans – especially children – meet their daily nutrition needs as outlined by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Additionally, the checkoff-led Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy® is implementing an industry-wide action plan to protect the availability of flavored milk in our nation's schools.

Working through the Innovation Center and closely with the Milk Processor Education Program (MilkPEP), the checkoff is sharing nutrition and product research, education materials and other resources with the industry about flavored milk in schools.

Local processors, suppliers and others in the industry received local market case studies and hands-on social media tools and training to help address concerns during the school bid season. Research shows the vast majority of parents do not support bans on flavored milk.

Information also has been shared with industry leaders to develop coordinated, proactive plans to protect milk's availability in schools. These efforts address potential scenarios that include situations where flavored milk is supported, debated and threatened.

For more information about the checkoff, visit www.dairycheckoff.com.

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