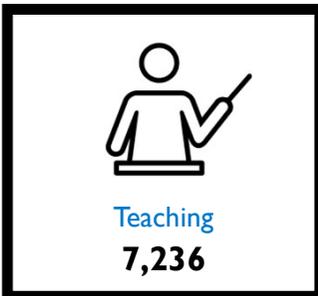
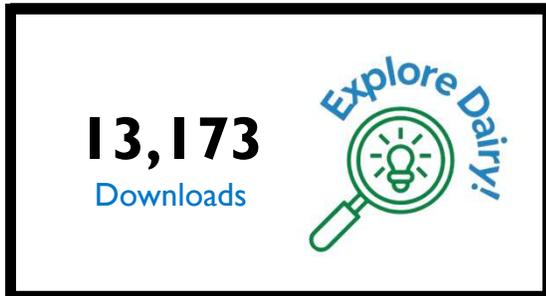
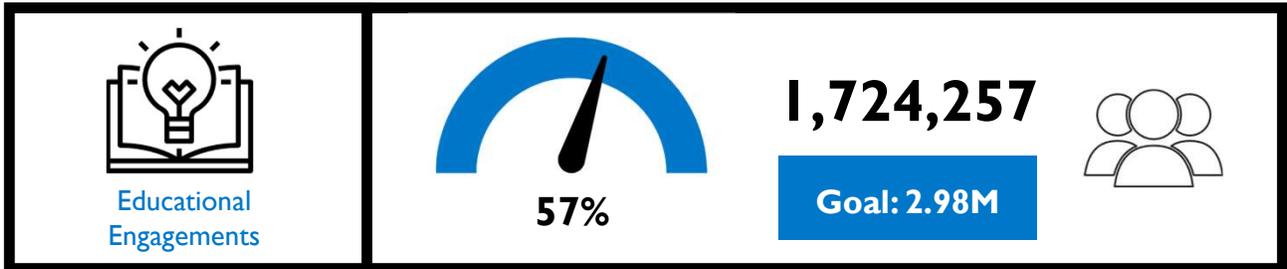






Dairy Inclusive Nutrition Education



January 31, 2024



Written Board Report

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OCTOBER 1, 2023, THROUGH JANUARY 31, 2024

Dairy Inclusive Nutrition Education

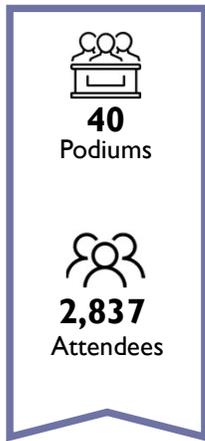
Outcome: Partners include dairy-inclusive nutrition literacy to children and communities.

Value for Educational Resources

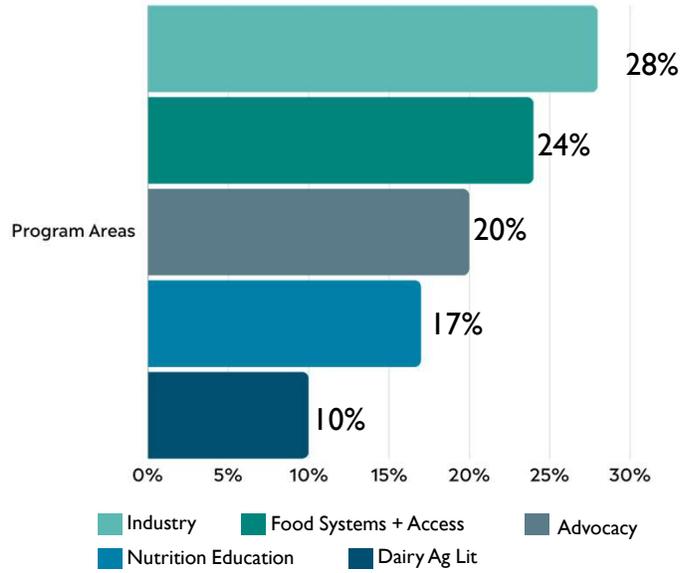
- Received approval from the California Department of Health Care Services that Dairy Council of California educational resources are evidence-based. With this approval, all Medi-Cal managed care plans can order and use resources from our website for five years, which encourages providers to use our messaging with patients.
 - "I have been requesting and receiving nutrition education materials from Dairy Council ever since 2018, and it makes me truly happy to admire the gratefulness of my patients when I hand them age-appropriate information about how to take advantage of this wonderful reminder to nurture themselves. Dairy Council resources never failed to provide necessary details in a friendly, easy-to-read, eye-catching format that leaves any reader with no doubt about how to make appropriate choices for their benefit and health. I look forward to continuing my relationship with Dairy Council to not only serve my current patients but my future ones as well!" —Health Provider
- Co-developed Let's Eat Healthy Together: Explore Dairy, a 5-lesson unit for elementary through high school students that explores the local, tasty and nutritious dairy food group. Co-developers included Lodi Unified, who was awarded a \$314,000 grant from the 2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, San Joaquin County Office of Education, and California educators. The resource has been downloaded over 13,100 times since launching in October 2023, expanding dairy education in a digital format.
 - "I surveyed my students about their favorite part of the lessons and most students mentioned either the dairy tastings or the video about the cow's diet. The students were the most engaged during the tastings, because they liked that they got to try dairy products and it was a hands-on experience as opposed to just talking about it. The video that the students liked the most was the one about the cow's diet. Some asked if we could do the mobile dairy assembly, so they could see the cow in person." -4th Grade teacher, Explore Dairy
- Sixty-five percent of our educational resource program orders originate from returning customers, signaling a great appreciation for our offerings and contributing to decreased marketing costs.



Milk and Dairy Advocacy 103 Activations



n=103



January 31, 2024

Supporting Milk + Dairy Advocacy

Outcome: Participants value milk and dairy foods as part of sustainable nutrition.

Advocacy

In October 2023, Dairy Council of CA and California Beef Council co-hosted the Nourish Sustainability dinner at the California School Nutrition Association's annual conference. Samantha Werth, PhD, Senior Director of Sustainability at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, delivered a keynote on sustainable food systems, highlighting the efforts of the cattle community to ensure dairy and beef are produced in a manner that is good for people, animals and planet. Attendees included child nutrition directors, chefs, Farm-to-School representatives, local cattle representatives and Dairy Council of CA Board Member Michael Oosten.

Policies and Guidelines

- Participated in discussions on ADD SOY Act with Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' School Nutrition Services members regarding the act's impact on school nutrition and children's health.
- Submitted public comments to 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee on draft scientific protocols.
- Contributed content to International Dairy Federation comments to World Health Organization's related to saturated and trans-fat.
- Educated California School Nutrition Association members on the industry's support during the carton shortage, provide guidance on the California Department of Education (CDE) waiver for reimbursable meals, emphasize the importance of science-based nutrition education including total sugar content in flavored milks and the cattle industry's commitment to sustainability.

Podiums

- Presented DCC's Trends to almost 80 school foodservice, Farm-to-School and industry professionals on the following themes: food as medicine, nutrition for key life stages, economic instability and environmentally responsible California dairies.
- Co-presented multiple sessions of "Winning at Wellness: Empowering School Communities Together" at the Santa Barbara County School Wellness Summit. These sessions successfully engaged 70 community partners and wellness leaders. The panels, featuring California Local School Wellness Policy Collaborative members, included speakers from Dairy Council of CA, CDE, No Kid Hungry, CalFresh Healthy Living, University of CA and two San Diego school districts. The summit also highlighted achievements from 2022-2023 Let's Eat Healthy Community Grant projects and unveiled Dairy Council of CA's partnership with Santa Barbara County School Wellness collaborative awarding three schools with Let's Eat Healthy Community Grants.
- Hosted the California Local School Wellness Policy Collaborative Winning at Wellness webinar educating 170 school and community professionals on actionable strategies for enhancing student health. Speakers included academic professionals from the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Health and the Collaboratory on School and Child Health, University of Connecticut.



Marketing and Communications Highlights

Email Outreach



73

emails sent

154,917

emails opened

Editorial Placements



6

press releases

6

published articles

Campaigns



5

- Farm-to-School Month
- Celebrating the Holidays with Food
- National School Lunch Week
- Healthy New Year
- National Milk Day

January 31, 2024

Marketing, Social Media and Communications

In addition to three campaigns in the first period—Summer Meals, Back-to-School and World School Milk Day—five more campaigns were completed, generating 11,854 web page views and 422 downloads of toolkits. The National Farm to School Month promotion garnered 1,289 attendees of the virtual MDC farm tours.

Press Releases

- Dairy Council of California Announces the Appointment of Four New Board Members
- With California Dairy Community Support, Dairy Council of California to Continue Its Longstanding Tradition of Nutrition Education and Advocacy
- Dairy Council of California Attends International Dairy Federation’s World Dairy Summit
- In Partnership with Dairy Council of California, Santa Barbara County School Wellness Summit Awards Three \$5,000 Let’s Eat Healthy Community Grants
- In Celebration of National Farm to School Month, Dairy Council of California Releases New Educational Resource—Let’s Eat Healthy Together: Explore Dairy

Articles

- “More Than a Meal, It’s a Legacy of Champions,” *Poppy Seeds*
- “Partnerships Bring Farm to School Education to Life,” *Poppy Seeds*

CEO Publications and Webinar

Publication	Topic
Hoard’s Dairyman	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Pass the Whole Milk”• “Students Encouraged to Explore Dairy”
Dairy Foods Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “The Importance of Nutrition Security”
Cheese Market News	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Front-of-Package Labeling Facing a ‘Momentous’ Change”
Dairy Foods Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panelist for “State of the Dairy Industry”



Partnerships with Organizations and Collaboratives



“We are pleased to have partnered with the Dairy Council of CA...[and other community organizations]...to personalize evidence-based recommendations that better reflect their culture, by adding traditional and familiar meals, foods and spices. With this wonderful final product, we reemphasize the importance of culturally responsive services and materials to best serve the needs of ... diverse families with young children.”
— Harumi Reis-Reilly

January 31, 2024

Partnership + Collaboration

Outcome: Champions engage in actions to advance access to milk and dairy foods.

“Securing the Let’s Eat Healthy Community Grant provides our students with the essential knowledge and tools for a healthier future. This grant opens doors to nutrition education and wellness initiatives that will lead our students on a path of lifelong well-being.” —Principal of Griffiths Middle School, Downey Unified School District

- Selected Let’s Eat Healthy Leadership Awardees, including two organizations and five individuals. Selections were made with the support of an external review committee that included board member Hem Shah.
- Distributed \$50,000 in Let’s Eat Healthy Community Grants to six partner agencies. Grantees include two community-based organizations, two school sites and two organizations engaging in dairy ag literacy. The selection process of grantees was made with the support of an external committee.
- Secured Raley’s as a retail partner to provide digital dairy vouchers in the Central Valley through the Legacy Health Endowment grant First 1,000 Days Special Project.
- Facilitated a Meet & Greet with California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Farm to School Network regional leads, who work with school districts throughout the state. Dairy Council of CA staff advised on dairy in school meal programs, general dairy nutrition, sustainable dairy farming and facilitating connections for local dairy farm tours.
- Co-developed a video on dairy’s role in sustainable nutrition in collaboration with Dairy Cares funded by the California Cattle Council. It covers critical contributions of dairy foods in supporting nutrition security and as a key component of healthy, sustainable diets.
- Collaborated with Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and Bayer to present on the role of modern agriculture in a safe food supply, innovations to improve sustainability and the role of biotechnology in food production through a national webinar.
- Developed and began distribution of two culturally tailored nutrition resources for families introducing solid foods to infants and toddlers as part of efforts to include milk and dairy foods in the first 1,000 days of life in collaboration with various partners working with Black and Latino families.

“We are pleased to have partnered with the Dairy Council of California ... to personalize evidence-based recommendations that better reflect their culture, by adding traditional and familiar meals, foods and spices. With this wonderful final product, we reemphasize the importance of culturally responsive services and materials to best serve the needs of ... diverse families with young children.” —Harumi Reis-Reilly, National Association of County and City Health Officials



Dairy Ag Literacy



Mobile Dairy Classroom

417
locations
reached
in-person



97
locations
reached
virtually



Expanded Outreach



14
Ag Days

- Fairplex - Pomona, CA
- Centennial Farms Discovery Ag Days
- Agriscapes Pumpkin Festival Ag Day

Exhibits



Estimated
Impressions
567,243

January 31, 2024

Dairy Agricultural Literacy

Outcome: Partners include dairy ag literacy as a component of sustainable food systems.

Expanded Outreach

- Expanded community events to include new and different ways to show the value of dairy foods. Over 4,000 families in Hesperia attended the New Book Festival, which included a dairy ag literacy Mobile Dairy Classroom.
- Presented at the Ventura County Farm Day, which was organized by the nonprofit Students for Eco-Education and Agriculture. Mobile Dairy Classroom engaged with 600 community members teaching dairy agricultural literacy and sustainable nutrition.
- Celebrated National Milk Day on January 11, 2024. Activities included hosting Mobile Dairy Classroom events in collaboration with two Let's Eat Healthy champions, sharing the history of milk home delivery and the value of milk. Scott Brothers Dairy provided free milk for students at the event.
 - Trained Centennial Farm docents on dairy nutrition and National Milk Day history to expand their knowledge when educating schoolchildren and the public.
 - Extended outreach through the local health care agency staff hosting a booth at a farmers' market on National Milk Day to encourage families to drink milk.

Mobile Dairy Classroom

Attendees continue to share overwhelmingly positive feedback on the school assembly through survey responses and outstanding comments.

“The presenter was amazing! She had all students engaged during the entire presentation. My students continued to discuss the presentation in class and make connections with the lessons regarding animals and humans that we have been learning in our language arts program. The presentation was AMAZING!” —3rd Grade Teacher, Bellingham Elementary School

Supporting Accessibility

Following is feedback from the first American Sign Language-supported Mobile Dairy Classroom Virtual Field Trip:

“... few [experiences] have captured and maintained my daughter's interest the way that the Dairy Council of California's virtual farm tour has. We would also like to reiterate our thanks for providing the experience in an increasingly accessible format. Emma was delighted to learn that she would have the opportunity to participate and learn in American Sign Language, another facet that I am confident helped her feel invested in the event.” —Melissa Blair, Parent



Building Value for Milk and Dairy Foods

First 1,000 Day Nutrition Resources

Milk
Move to whole dairy milk in a cup at around 12 months of age to help meet calcium, vitamin D and protein needs.

Why Whole Dairy Milk?

- Milk includes important fats that are needed for brain growth.
- Milk has a unique package of nutrients that can be difficult to replace.
- Plant-based nondairy drinks made with nuts, rice or coconut do not have the same nutrients found in dairy milk.

Feeding Infants and Toddlers
Highlighting Hispanic Heritage Foods

Feeding Infants and Young Toddlers
Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
Highlighting African, Black and Caribbean Heritage Foods

“The presentation is perfect, the distribution of information is great, the section on the transition to whole milk is important.”

“I learned that babies could have yogurt and cheese. I introduced yogurt to my 9 month old and she loves it.”

January 31, 2024

Value for Milk and Dairy Foods

Outcome: Participants value milk and dairy foods as part of healthy eating patterns.



Trends was published in January 2024 with a dedicated marketing campaign that garnered over 2,800 views of the online publication and positive feedback from survey responses on its relevance.

Staff co-presented with a panel of three Let's Eat Healthy champions in a session titled "Cultivating Experiential Learning: Connecting the Farm, Cafeteria and Classroom" to over 100 attendees at the California School Nutrition Association conference. The Taste and Teach lesson and the Let's Eat Healthy broadcast episode featuring cheese and dairy nutrition education were shared out. Outcomes include:



"Thank you for having this program available for us teachers to teach accurate nutrition information. Thank you for providing lactose-intolerant options. Thank you for having a certified, experienced, passionate, enthusiastic dietitian to present accurate nutritional information.... —Elk Grove Educator Attending Professional Development Training

"My SMART goal is to add 2 additional servings of dairy per day to my diet by eating yogurt at breakfast and after school for a snack." —Let's Eat Healthy Teens, 10th Grade Student

Third-Party Expert Support

Endorsements for milk and dairy products from credible voices extend messages to partners and communities. Clarisse Casilang, MD, FAAP [Children's Hospital, Orange County](#) Pediatrics Lead Physician, provided three specific dairy quotes to support milk in the first 1,000 days of life and for school-age children.

"What you offer your child to drink in the first 5 years of life can shape taste preferences and health outcomes for a lifetime. Thankfully, the best-choice beverages are simple: water and milk. Milk provides calcium, vitamin D, protein, vitamin A, and zinc—all essential for healthy growth and development." — Dr. Clarisse Casilang



HOARD'S DAIRYMAN

Students encouraged to Explore Dairy

BY **AMY DELISIO, DAIRY COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA**
10/30/23



Farm to School programs are hailed as a pathway to local procurement of fresh farm products and access for children to critically needed nutritious meals. These programs often also include another important component to ensure children grow healthfully: nutrition education.

That's why, in conjunction with National Farm to School Month in October, Dairy Council of California introduced [Let's Eat Healthy Together: Explore Dairy](#), a new no-cost resource that builds value for

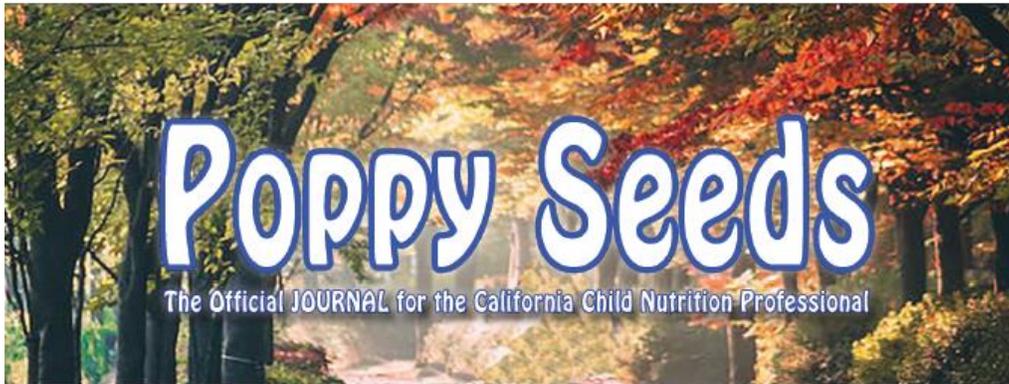
milk and dairy foods as part of healthy, sustainable eating patterns.

The educational unit, produced in partnership with the Lodi Unified School District, California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, and the San Joaquin County Office of Education, is available in three digital formats for kindergarten through high school students. Let's Eat Healthy Together: Explore Dairy invites students to use their senses, highlighting local, seasonal, and nutritious dairy foods through tasty pairings with fruits and vegetables.

The Explore Dairy program is designed to reconnect children with where food comes from, build appreciation and value for the food system, and support healthy eating patterns through lessons that include videos, taste tests, extension activities, and more.

Schools are increasingly becoming a focal point for efforts to adopt plant-based eating patterns, so maintaining a presence in schools is more important than ever for the dairy community. In addition to continuing to provide schools with dairy foods as part of school meals, programs like Explore Dairy and [other nutrition education programs offered by the dairy community](#) are paramount to ensuring children build an appreciation for dairy foods as part of healthy eating patterns. These lessons are needed not only during National Farm to School Month but all year long.

To comment, email your remarks to intel@hoards.com
(c) Hoard's Dairyman Intel 2023



Partnership Brings Farm to School Education to Life

Authored by:

Sonia Fernandez Arana, Dairy Council of California, Let's Eat Healthy Program Manager
Dr. Betty Crocker, Nutrition Services Director, Lodi Unified School District

October is National Farm to School Month, a campaign dedicated to connecting children and communities to nutritious local foods while supporting farmers, agriculture and the economy. This year marks the 13th anniversary of National Farm to School Month, first enacted by Congress in 2010 to recognize food systems and honor farmers and those that contribute to school meal programs.

For over a century, Dairy Council of California has been leading farm to school efforts through the support of the California dairy community by bringing the original Farm to School program, Mobile Dairy Classroom, to schools across the state. Additionally, Dairy Council of California is committed to fostering partnerships with districts and school nutrition professionals to engage students in learning the journey of food, the impact of the local food system and how nutrient-rich foods contribute to a healthy eating pattern.

"Partnerships and nutrition security are key to Dairy Council of California and are activated through our Let's Eat Healthy initiative. We are proud to work with Lodi Unified School District as one of our

Let's Eat Healthy partners, together advancing food access, nutrition education and agricultural literacy," states Shannan Young, RDN, SNS, Partnerships and Programs Officer, Dairy Council of California. "This year we are collaborating to support the district's expanded farm to school efforts and increased agriculture literacy by educating on topics including California's leading agricultural commodity, milk and dairy foods."

The California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Farm to Fork awarded a \$314,000 grant to Lodi Unified School District Nutrition Services through the 2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program to expand its farm to school initiatives. The district and Dairy Council of California are teaming up to provide experiential nutrition and dairy agriculture literacy activities across grade levels through Lodi's Farm to School, Edible Nutrition Education Program. This funding is vital to support nutrition education that will help students understand the connection of fresh, locally grown foods and what is being served in their own school cafeterias.

Continued on Page 46
 CSNA - Poppy Seeds Magazine



Immersive learning for all grade levels will equip scholars to become conscious consumers, which will directly change the positive perception of "school food."

Lodi Unified School District Nutrition Specialist Alena Miller shares, "Lodi USD Nutrition Services is so excited to create an Edible Nutrition Education Program, offering apple, citrus, berry, squash and dairy learning experiences in the classroom for all grade levels. It is a great privilege to work with Dairy Council of California to bridge the gap between local dairy items currently offered in school meals to what is taught in classrooms. With this partnership, the dairy Taste & Teach learning opportunities will connect students to where food comes from, how it tastes, and how to eat healthy with school meals and at home."

Dairy Council of California's collaboration on the Edible Nutrition Education Program features coordinating dairy farm field trips and developing a dairy-focused farm to school resource that supports the grant. Let's Eat Healthy Together: Explore Dairy is a five-day unit that explores milk and dairy foods and their journey from the farm. Each day's unit varies to include taste tests, recipes, videos, extension activities, projects and more. There are also essential pieces like vocabulary, background information for educators, and family connections to continue the learning at home. Lessons build appreciation for the value of food while also providing an opportunity to build healthy eating patterns. Tasting experiences promote the nutritious menu offerings as well as participation in Lodi's school meal program.

The goal is to empower students to make better lifelong nutritional choices and help remove the stigma of school meals for the food-insecure population. The resource Let's Eat Healthy Together: Explore Dairy was developed alongside educators to ensure fun and engaging content for K-12 students. It will not only educate students in Lodi but will also be available to educators throughout California.

For resources to celebrate National Farm to School Month, visit Dairy Council of California's Farm to You page at HealthyEating.org/FarmtoSchool, which includes this newest dairy-focused farm to school resource. To join the Let's Eat Healthy initiative visit HealthyEating.org

About the Authors:

Sonia Fernandez Arana, MA, is the Let's Eat Healthy Program Manager for Dairy Council of California. The Let's Eat Healthy initiative, activated by Dairy Council of California, champions community health through shared values and collaboration. Let's Eat Healthy provides an actionable platform to improve access to science-based nutrition education, agricultural programs and nutritious foods for children and their families.

Dr. Betty Crocker, RDN, SNS, is the Nutrition Services Director for Lodi Unified School District and a 2022-2023 Let's Eat Healthy Leadership Award winner. Dr. Crocker is on a mission to reclaim the food environment in her region with her farming community and empower every child each school day with healthy meals. A Le Cordon Bleu-trained chef and registered dietitian, Dr. Crocker has a doctorate from Loma Linda University in policy and leadership. She is an industry veteran with over 20 years of foodservice experience and has worked in school nutrition since 2015.



Guest Columns

Perspective: Dairy Nutrition

Front-of-package labeling facing a 'momentous' change

Amy DeLisio

Amy DeLisio is CEO of the Dairy Council of California. She is a registered dietitian with a master's degree in public health from the University of Southern California and earned her bachelor's degree in dietetics at Youngstown State University. She contributes this column exclusively for Cheese Market News®.

Walking down the grocery store aisle these days can feel a bit overwhelming, as marketers increasingly add claims to their packaging to attract consumers and communicate a variety of real or perceived benefits. From organic, non-GMO and natural to fair trade-certified or sustainably sourced, the list is growing — and these claims can help or hinder sustainable food choices.

In addition, labeling tactics that focus on single components such as lowfat, sugar-free or low sodium have the potential to oversimplify dietary decisions, confuse consumers and create a health halo for some foods over others.

FDA is focusing on front-of-package labeling by developing a system it says will quickly communicate and provide context to certain nutritional information. "This has the potential to be one of the most momentous changes to food labeling since the Nutrition Facts label," said Robert M. Califf, M.D., commissioner of Food and Drugs. "Front-of-package labeling could help consumers, especially those who may be less familiar with nutritional information, identify foods that can help them build a healthy eating pattern," said Califf.

As part of this effort, FDA is updating its definition of "healthy" and conducting research on a symbol to represent the "healthy" claim. The current definition was set in 1994 when nutrition science was based on single nutrients. Today, focus is on dietary patterns made up of a variety of nutrients and other components. With so much potential to influence consumers, the dairy community, including cheesemakers, must pay attention to discussions around food labels and advocate that FDA's proposed framework consider a food's complete matrix of benefits.

- Look beyond single nutrients

The relationships between the nutrient and non-nutrient components of foods — including vitamins, minerals and bioactive components as well as physical structure, texture and form — are important to

consider when discussing what is “healthy.” This concept refers to a food matrix and can explain how a food’s nutrient and non-nutrient interactions impact digestion, absorption and physiological functions important for health.

The dairy food matrix provides a unique example of the advancement of research in this area, as dairy is a diverse group of foods that contain nutrients and bioactive components that vary in amount and macro- and micronutrient structure. The food matrix concept embraces the importance of considering whole foods alongside the individual components they contain, which is particularly important in relation to public health policy. Dietary guidance should be based on an evaluation of the health effects of whole foods, including dairy, not just single nutrients such as fat, sugar or sodium.

Labeling criteria that sets specific limits for saturated fat, added sugars and sodium without consideration of the food matrix could inadvertently lower intake of nutrient-dense foods like cheese, milk and yogurt. Such criteria have the potential to reduce a food to its “negative” nutrients without consideration for the overall nutritional content of a food and the positive contribution it makes to a healthy diet.

- Prioritize food groups and diet quality to impact health

In addition to looking at the complete food matrix of foods, it is also important to look at overall food groups and diet quality. Eating a variety of high-quality foods from the food groups will have a greater impact on health than any one food could have. It’s also important to recognize that people eat different combinations of foods over time, rather than nutrients in isolation. Dietary recommendations are increasingly focusing on consistent eating patterns of healthy food consumption. In addition, high-quality foods such as dairy foods create the foundation for healthy eating patterns.

The quality of a food and its food matrix, altered by processing and other factors, can fall on a spectrum of how the food impacts health. For example, research looking specifically at fat in dairy foods suggests that dairy fat may have unique properties that differentiate it from fat found in other food sources. In addition, evidence continues to show that dairy foods like cheese, milk and yogurt offer a unique and essential package of nutrients that work together to provide multiple health benefits, including optimal growth and development in children and reduced risk of developing chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

As focus on front-of-package labeling continues, the dairy community must work together to ensure dairy foods remain an essential part of healthy eating patterns. Nutrition education is a critical path forward. At Dairy Council of California, we engage in education and advocacy at multiple levels — including regulatory, community, institutional, interpersonal and individual — to shift knowledge, values and actions for greater impact. As part of the process, we use our unique expertise and ability to translate science and value of dairy foods into actionable solutions to help build healthy, sustainable food systems. These efforts are strengthened through partnerships within the dairy community that lead to greater impact. Visit HealthyEating.org to learn more.

CMN

The views expressed by CMN’s guest columnists are their own opinions and do not necessarily reflect those of Cheese Market News®.

HOARD'S DAIRYMAN

Pass the whole milk

BY **AMY DELISIO, DAIRY COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA**
12/11/2023



It's no secret that dairy milk has faced a slew of competitive beverages over recent years, many of them plant based. For dairy milk consumers, low fat and fat-free varieties have long been a popular choice, but advancing research gives good reason for consumers to include full-fat dairy products in their healthy eating patterns.

Full-fat dairy products are shown to have a positive impact on chronic disease risk at a time when heart disease, diabetes, and obesity are affecting a significant portion of adults and children. [One study found](#) a diet

with higher amounts of fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts, fish, and whole-fat dairy is associated with lower cardiovascular disease – especially in countries with smaller incomes where consumption of these foods is limited. [Another study](#) that examined the relationship between consuming different fat types of dairy foods and risk of diabetes found protective associations for high-fat dairy types. In addition, [current science suggests](#) that full-fat dairy foods may have positive effects on cardiometabolic health, depending on an individual's overall health.

These positive associations with full-fat dairy foods are not based on individual nutrients but rather on the dairy matrix, which includes both the nutrient and non-nutrient components of foods – vitamins, minerals, and bioactive components, as well as physical structure, texture, and form. Together, these elements can affect digestion, absorption, and physiological functions important for health.

Emerging research on the benefits of dairy foods, including full-fat versions, is especially relevant now, as the “food is medicine” philosophy and resulting programs move into the mainstream, catching the attention, action, and dollars of the public health and health care communities, food policy advocates, and more. Food is medicine is also considered an important solution to improving nutrition security and addressing health inequities often seen in under-resourced communities. Dairy has an opportunity to be integral to these efforts both through contributions to federal and child nutrition assistance programs and through growing efforts that include food prescription programs and even medically tailored meals.

To learn more on emerging dairy foods research, stay tuned for Dairy Council of California's 2024 *Trends* report to be released in early January. Meanwhile, see past *Trends* reports at DairyCouncilofCA.org/Trends or visit HealthyEating.org.



[DAIRY FOODS & BEVERAGES](#) [DAIRY FOODS COLUMNISTS](#)

The importance of nutrition security

The dairy industry can make a big difference by supporting nutrition access programs.

By [Amy DeLisio](#)

December 14, 2023



Amy DeLisio, MPH, RDN, serves as CEO of Dairy Council of California, bringing a wealth of executive and professional expertise to the position. Amy previously served as the executive director for the Center for Wellness and Nutrition, Public Health Institute, where she grew the program over the last seven years leading more than 30 staff members towards a noteworthy cause. Three years prior to that, Amy served as a program director for the Public Health Institute.

Public health dialogue around food and nutrition is evolving from a focus on simply providing calories to ensuring children and families have access to high-quality, nutritious food that will allow them to reach their full potential. Yet, there is growing acceptance that even access to nutritious foods isn't enough, as the conditions in which people live, learn, work, play, and gather — the social determinants of health — also are significant contributors to overall health and quality of life.

Nutrition security is defined as reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious food to avoid hunger and stay healthy. Nutrition equity, on the other hand, is all about identifying barriers and allocating resources, so all people are supported to live healthfully. The dairy community can make a big difference in these areas by supporting nutrition access programs and nutrition education initiatives.

Nutrition access is the foundation to elevate health

Federal meal programs provide a critical safety net for millions of Americans who rely on them for nourishment. Programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; the National School Lunch Program; the School Breakfast Program; and the Child and Adult Care Program play a vital role in granting children, families, and

communities access to essential nutritious foods, including milk and dairy products, which are needed for healthy growth and development.

The milk and dairy foods in school meal programs provide children with nutrients they need to grow, learn, and be healthy. Access to nutritious foods like dairy foods is especially important during early childhood, as research shows that eating patterns established at an early age influence not only academic and lifelong success but also food and beverage choices made throughout life. Ultimately, eating patterns established early on can affect health outcomes such as risk for obesity, hypertension, and diabetes in adulthood. In addition, eating school meals every day is associated with healthier dietary intakes among U.S. schoolchildren and increased intakes of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy foods.

In California, the state is taking bold steps to improve access to nutritious foods and provide increased access to farm products for young people. In 2021, California became the first state in the nation to offer free universal school meals for all children. The program was built on the foundation of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs and ensures all public school students in the state are offered breakfast and lunch. In addition, Gov. Gavin Newsom's 2022 climate action package expanded the state's Farm to School programs, providing grants to schools to procure locally grown and produced foods for school meals. And while some see farm-to-school programs as a pathway to more plant-based meals, opportunity exists for the dairy community to take part in these programs and showcase the value of milk and dairy foods.

2023 CFHL FORUM POSTER BOOK

Equity in Action:
Supporting
Healthy
Communities
Together



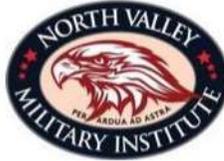
Let's Eat Healthy: Building Healthier Communities Together

Sonia Fernandez Arana, Dairy Council of California

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The Let's Eat Healthy grants activated by the Dairy Council of California engaged a statewide, multi-sector network of champions to address the diverse nutritional needs of communities through:

- Authentic engagement
- Innovative and tailored community-based solutions
- Amplification of best practice



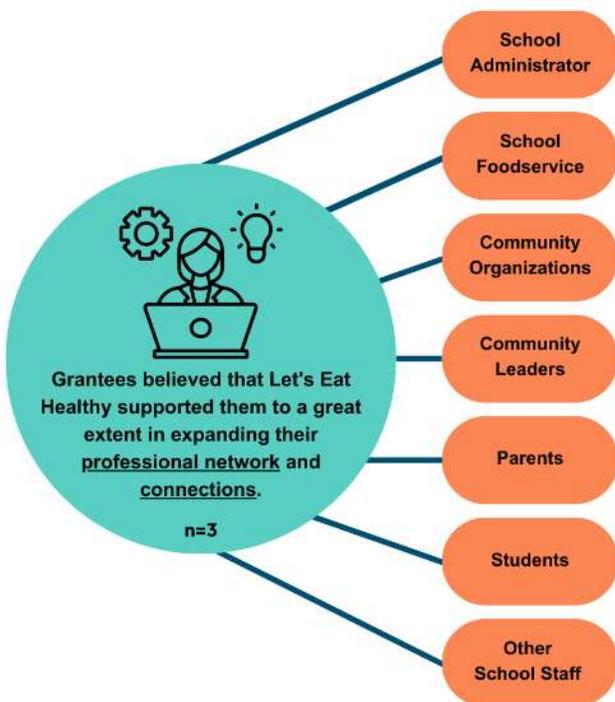
COLLABORATIVE ACTION

Let's Eat Healthy engaged three sectors, including a local government, school and community organization, through the Let's Eat Healthy grant partnership to advance access to nutrition education, agricultural literacy, and food access. Nutrition intervention strategies included:

- Teens as Teachers
- Family-Centered Nutrition Literacy
- Dairy's Role in Sustainable Nutrition



BUILDING STRENGTHS



Partnerships generate meaningful impact by building upon the actions and commitment of one another. Through grant partnership, the City of Rancho Cucamonga, Centennial Farm, and North Valley Military Institute engaged seven diverse collaborators as part of the grant to provide expertise, resources, support, and community perspective resulting in the authentic development of programming that met the needs of their diverse communities.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Let's Eat Healthy forges strategic partnerships to support California school districts and community organizations in cultivating community-informed, innovative, and sustainable solutions to promote healthy eating. This multi-faceted approach involves leveraging the collective expertise and resources of over 620+ registered statewide partners that comprise the Let's Eat Healthy network, including CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL). The network inspires coordination, collaboration, and co-creation through cross-sector partnerships and engages CHFL at the state and local levels to support the implementation of policy, system, and environmental change strategies, including school wellness and the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.

"Healthy cooking skills are vital in supporting the well-being of teens and will inspire them for the future and beyond."

Joanna Marrufo, Youth Advisor, City of Rancho Cucamonga