



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Contacts:

Peggy Armstrong, IDFA, (202) 220-3508

John Hollay, NMPF, (703) 243-6111

### **Capitol Hill Briefing Focuses on the Role of Milk in Child Nutrition Programs**

**(Washington, D.C. – April 29, 2015)** A Capitol Hill briefing for House staff yesterday focused on a [new report](#) on “Fluid Milk in School Programs” by the National Dairy Council. It was hosted by Representative G.T. Thompson (R-PA) and Representative Joe Courtney (D-CT) in the House Committee on Agriculture. The National Milk Producers Federation and the International Dairy Foods Association strongly support the National Dairy Council’s report and helped coordinate the briefing.

The report identified declining milk consumption in schools as a concern because of the nutritional importance of milk in children’s diets. The majority of school-aged children do not meet current government dietary recommended intakes for low-fat and fat-free milk and dairy products. With Congress set to reauthorize school nutrition programs this year, this report will provide members of Congress with the information they need to ensure that school children continue to have access to healthy and nutritious dairy products.

“The decline in milk consumption is worrisome because it is difficult to replace the nutrient package found in milk with other foods, without adding extra calories and cost,” Jean Ragalie-Carr, RD, president of the National Dairy Council, told briefing participants. She discussed the role of fluid milk in school meal programs and outlined the opportunity for improved child nutrition through increased milk consumption.

Robert Murray, M.D., professor of human nutrition at The Ohio State University, emphasized the importance of milk as a component of a healthy diet. “People must think in terms of the whole food pattern, not just individual nutrients,” he said.

Milk is the leading source of nine essential nutrients for children 2 – 18 years old. Milk also includes eight grams of protein in each eight-ounce serving.

School meals are designed to provide foods recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), including low fat and fat free milk. As the Obama administration continues its work on the next set of dietary guidelines, preliminary [findings](#) by the committee charged with drafting the DGA have already demonstrated strong support for continued consumption of dairy products. The school milk report provides background information on numerous USDA programs that include milk, as well as identifies the challenges to maintaining and expanding milk consumption to achieve recommended dietary guidelines.

###

#### **About IDFA**

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), Washington, D.C., represents the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industries and their suppliers, with a membership of 550 companies within a \$125-billion a year industry. IDFA is composed of three constituent organizations: the Milk Industry Foundation (MIF), the National Cheese Institute (NCI) and the International Ice Cream Association (IICA). IDFA's nearly 200 dairy processing members run nearly 600 plant operations, and range from large multi-national organizations to single-plant companies. Together they represent more than 85 percent of the milk, cultured products, cheese, ice cream and frozen desserts produced and marketed in the United States. IDFA can be found online at [www.idfa.org](http://www.idfa.org).

#### **About NMPF**

The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the wellbeing of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit [www.nmpf.org](http://www.nmpf.org) for more information.