



## **Statement to the Second Meeting of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee**

### **Beth Briczinski, PhD., Vice President, Dairy Foods and Nutrition National Milk Producers Federation**

Good morning. As this committee reviews the scientific evidence, I hope you will keep in mind that dairy foods are uniquely nutrient-rich and virtually irreplaceable in the diet if we want to meet nutrient recommendations. We strongly urge the committee to maintain the current recommendation of three daily servings of dairy for most Americans, and to focus on the serious public health problem of under-consumption of milk and dairy foods.

In the American diet, milk, cheese and yogurt contribute more than one-half of the calcium and vitamin D, more than one-quarter of the phosphorus and vitamin A, and significant percentages of vitamin B12, riboflavin, protein, zinc, potassium and magnesium.<sup>1</sup> Dairy foods are perfect examples of nutrient-dense foods, providing significant amounts of all the nutrients I've just mentioned – yet contributing a substantially lower share of total calories.

Meeting nutrient recommendations is extremely difficult without dairy. Milk and other dairy products are the #1 source of nine essential nutrients in children's diets – protein, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, vitamins A, B12, D and riboflavin.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the 2010 DGAC found that when foods from the milk group were removed from model food patterns, intakes of calcium, vitamin D and three other important nutrients fell below the goals. Even if calcium levels can be maintained with alternative foods, the levels of other nutrients such as protein, potassium and vitamin D are adversely affected – there is simply no substitute for dairy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dairy Research Institute, NHANES (2007-2008). Ages 2-5 years. Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [2007-2008]. [<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm>].

<sup>2</sup> Keast DR, Fulgoni VL, Nicklas TA, et al. Food Sources of Energy and Nutrients among Children in the United States: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2003-2006. *Nutrients* 2013, 5, 283-301.

<sup>3</sup> Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. 2010. Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Washington, D.C.

Cost is also a factor. According to recent research, dairy is among the most economical foods across a variety of metrics<sup>4</sup>, where milk was among the lowest-cost sources of protein, vitamin A, calcium, vitamin B-12 and riboflavin. If families try to replace dairy in their diets, they will likely have to spend more in order to maintain the same nutrient intake. At a time of persistently high unemployment and under-employment, as well as sustained increases in the use of federal food assistance programs, the question of cost is highly relevant.<sup>5</sup>

Since dairy is the #1 source of nine essential nutrients in kids' diets ... and many of these nutrients are difficult – if not impossible – to replace when milk is eliminated from the diet ... and replacing even some of them would require more spending by cash-strapped families ... we would respectfully urge this committee to promote the need for meeting dairy recommendations as an urgent matter of public health. Americans have major shortfalls in recommended milk consumption starting at 4 years of age.<sup>6</sup> None of us should find that acceptable.

Research published since 2010 has strengthened the case for dairy's beneficial role in reducing the risk of several chronic diseases. But, as I have said, many population groups do not consume anywhere near the recommended amounts. The good news is that if people who under-consume dairy would add even one serving a day, that would bring average daily intakes of Americans much closer to meeting Dietary Guideline recommendations. We hope this committee will encourage people who are under-consuming dairy to add that extra serving.

Thank you.

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<sup>4</sup> Drewnowski A. The Nutrient Rich Foods Index helps to identify healthy, affordable foods. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2010;91(suppl); 1095S-1101S.

<sup>5</sup> Quann E and Adams D. Impact on Milk Consumption and Nutrient Intakes From Eliminating Flavored Milk in Elementary Schools. *Nutr Today* 2013, Vol. 48, No. 3, 127-134.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service. Economic Research Report Number 149: Why Are Americans Consuming Less Fluid Milk? A Look at Generational Differences in Intake Frequency. May 2013. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/1118789/err149.pdf>