

Statement to USDA/HHS on the Scientific Report of the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

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Good morning, my name is Miquela Hanselman and I am the Manager of Regulatory Affairs for the National Milk Producers Federation. First, I would like to thank and commend the Advisory Committee for their work on the Scientific Report. Their recognition of low-fat and non-fat dairy in a healthy diet further cements the need for people to consume dairy products across the lifespan. Dairy was associated with many beneficial health outcomes for adults including reduced risk of hip fractures, decreased risk of cardiovascular disease, favorable outcomes related to body weight and risk of obesity, and lower risk of colorectal cancer. Furthermore, the committee gave a nod to dairy's nutrient density, and included it in food recommendations developed for 6-24 months.

We applaud the committee for maintaining low-fat and non-fat dairy in the healthy eating patterns and for recommending three servings in the healthy U.S. and vegetarian diets and two servings in the healthy Mediterranean diet. The committee, correctly in our view, maintained dairy as its own group and did not allow the inclusion of any plant-based beverages or foods other than fortified soy beverage.

However, the Committee did fall short on one topic- the recognition of the newer science on dairy fats. Although we are pleased that the Committee didn't lower the saturated fats daily limit, we wish they had included the newer science on dairy fats in their recommendation. While the committee did acknowledge the need for more research and analysis on fat sources and food matrices, they failed to include the breadth of science that already exists in this area in their review. For this reason, we urge USDA and HHS to review the scientific literature on dairy foods at all fat levels and draw their own conclusions.

The Scientific Report also stated that 88% of Americans are under consuming dairy. This is startling given dairy is recognized as a good source for four nutrients of public health concern for ages one year and older including vitamin D, potassium, calcium, and iodine in pregnant women. Dairy is also a great source of protein, which is a nutrient of public health concern for teenage girls. A glass of milk, on average, contains eight grams of complete protein. The micronutrient package paired with the protein milk offers makes it an invaluable addition to the diet.

Lastly, I would be remiss not to discuss the current situation in our country and the increase in food insecurity. While the committee didn't comment on the current pandemic, COVID-19, they did repeatedly bring up the need to look at how socioeconomic status impacts a person's nutrition and overall health. Historically, about one in six Americans are food insecure. Now, in light of the pandemic, that number has dramatically escalated. It is important, now more than

ever, that people have access to healthy, affordable food. One study found that dairy products were inexpensive sources of potassium and vitamin D with cheese and milk being the least expensive source of calcium. Dairy continues to be a nutrient rich, budget-friendly option for Americans.

As USDA and HHS begin to put together the guidelines, we urge you to follow the lead of the Advisory Committee and maintain dairy's important role in the diet as well as consider the newer science on milk fat.

NMPF appreciates this opportunity to provide these comments and thanks you for your time.