

June 5, 2023

The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Chairwoman
The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott, Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott,

We write to voice our strong support for the *Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act* (H.R.1147), a bipartisan bill being led by Representatives Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA) and Kim Schrier (D-WA). The measure would expand the milk options available for schools to serve in the school meal nutrition programs, thereby strengthening schools’ ability to choose the milk that best serves their students’ nutritional needs.

Good nutrition is a cornerstone of kids’ health and development, and milk plays an unparalleled role in providing the nutrients kids need to grow and thrive. Milk at all fat levels provides 13 essential nutrients, with milk being the number one source of protein for kids 2-11ⁱ and the top source of calcium, potassium, phosphorus, and vitamin D for children ages 2-18.ⁱⁱ Dairy delivers 7 of the 14 nutrients the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends for optimal brain developmentⁱⁱⁱ as well as nutrients vital for immune health^{iv,v} and bone growth and development during a child’s school aged years.^{vi, vii, viii, ix}

However, most kids and adolescents do not meet the daily dairy intake recommendations made in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA): According to the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee report, between 68% and 76.2% of school age males and between 77.4% and 94.3% of school age females fail to meet recommended levels of dairy.^x This is a nutrition problem for our kids, as they must actually consume the milk to benefit from milk’s nutrients.

Students take less milk and throw away more milk in schools when they do not have milk variety options they like.^{xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xv} We also know that whole milk and 2% (reduced-fat) milk are the two most popular varieties of milk sold. What’s more, a recent survey of American parents shows that 43% and 35% believe that whole milk and 2% milk respectively are the healthiest options for their children.^{xvi}

And whole milk and reduced-fat milk *are* healthy options. Nutrition science tells us to be mindful of certain types of fat, and a growing body of evidence on dairy fat specifically shows that dairy foods at all fat levels have a neutral or *positive* effect on health outcomes, ranging from obesity and diabetes to heart disease and healthy cholesterol levels.^{xvii, xviii, xix, xx, xxi, xxii} Looking specifically at the effects on children’s health, several recent studies (including systematic reviews and meta-analyses) examining the effect of higher fat milk consumption found that it was associated with lower childhood obesity and concluded that dietary guidelines that recommend reduced-fat milk versions might not lower the risk of childhood obesity.^{xxiii, xxiv, xxv, xxvi}

The practical solution to our child nutrition problem is to expand the popular, healthy milk options schools can choose to serve to improve students’ nutrient intake. The bipartisan *Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act* provides this practical solution. It does not require schools serve reduced-fat or whole milk, but it does allow schools the choice. We strongly urge you to support this measure.

Sincerely,
Agri-Mark, Inc.
Associated Milk Producers Inc.

Bongards' Creameries
Burnett Dairy Cooperative
California Dairies, Inc.
California Dairy Campaign
Cayuga Marketing
Center for Dairy Excellence (PA)
Colorado Dairy Farmers
Cooperative Milk Producers Association
Dairy Business Association
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.
Dairy Producers of New Mexico
Dairy Producers of Utah
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative
First District Association
Foremost Farms USA
Georgia Milk Producers, Inc.
Idaho Dairymen's Association
Illinois Milk Producers Association
Indiana Dairy Producers
Iowa State Dairy Association
Kansas Dairy Association
Kansas Livestock Association
Kentucky Dairy Development Council
Land O'Lakes, Inc.
Lone Star Milk Producers
Maine Dairy Industry Association
Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association
Michigan Milk Producers Association
Milk Producers Council
Minnesota Milk Producers Association
Mount Joy Farmers Cooperative Association
National All-Jersey, Inc.
National Milk Producers Federation
Nebraska State Dairy Association
Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperatives
Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Inc.
Northwest Dairy Association/Darigold
Ohio Dairy Producers Association
Oneida-Madison Milk Producers Cooperative Association
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.
Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania
Scioto Cooperative Milk Producers' Association
South Dakota Dairy Producers
Southeast Dairy Farmers Association
Southeast Milk, Inc.
Texas Association of Dairywomen
Tillamook County Creamery Association
United Dairy Farmers of Florida, Inc.

United Dairymen of Arizona
Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc.
Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance
Virginia State Dairymen's Association
Washington State Dairy Federation

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