

Dairy Foods: A Necessary Part of Diet

SOUTHAMPTON — Though perhaps hard to believe, there are some 50 references to cows in the Old Testament. To the early people of Central Asia, wealth was measured in numbers of cattle. The cow was even worshipped in India, Babylonia, and Egypt.

What all this means, says Dairy Council Inc., Southampton, Pa., is that the cow has been around for a long time. And so has milk.

Although milk is processed, it is not an engineered or fabricated food. It naturally has three major components: water; fat including fat-soluble vitamins; and solids-not-fat, including protein, carbohydrate, water-soluble vitamins, and minerals.

In milk's liquid, the carbohydrate is dissolved, fat droplets are suspended, and protein is dispersed. Together with the vitamins and minerals, these nutrients interact in milk, making it a food unduplicated by modern science.

Milk has great nutritional value. It contains high-quality protein, stemming from the presence of many amino acids. Protein's major functions are to build and repair body tissues and to help form antibodies which circulate in the blood and fight infection. It also provides energy — about 33 of the 150 calories in an 8-ounce serving.

Milk's carbohydrate is a sugar called lactose. Lactose aids the absorption of calcium, phosphorus, and other minerals. It provides about 45 of the 150 calories in an 8-ounce serving.

Milkfat is a carrier of vitamins A, D, E, and K; these vitamins are important in the utilization of other nutrients. For example, vitamin D as well as lactose aids calcium absorption in the body.

Milk's major nutrients are calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, and sodium. Other minerals are also present in varying degrees. It is best known for its calcium content, the mineral essential for strong bones. In fact, dairy foods are the major source of this mineral in the American diet, providing nearly 72 percent of the available calcium in the American food supply.

Of nutrients available for consumption, dairy products excluding butter provide 20.7% of the necessary protein, 11.4% fat, 5.6% carbohydrate, 33% phosphorus, 20% magnesium, 12.3% vitamin A, 36.5% riboflavin, 10.8% vitamin B₆, and 18.6% vitamin B₁₂.

Compared to other foods, dairy products do not contain high amounts of cholesterol. A three-ounce fish fillet has 34-75 mg. cholesterol; half a roasted chicken breast without skin has 79 mg. One cup of milk has only 33 mg.

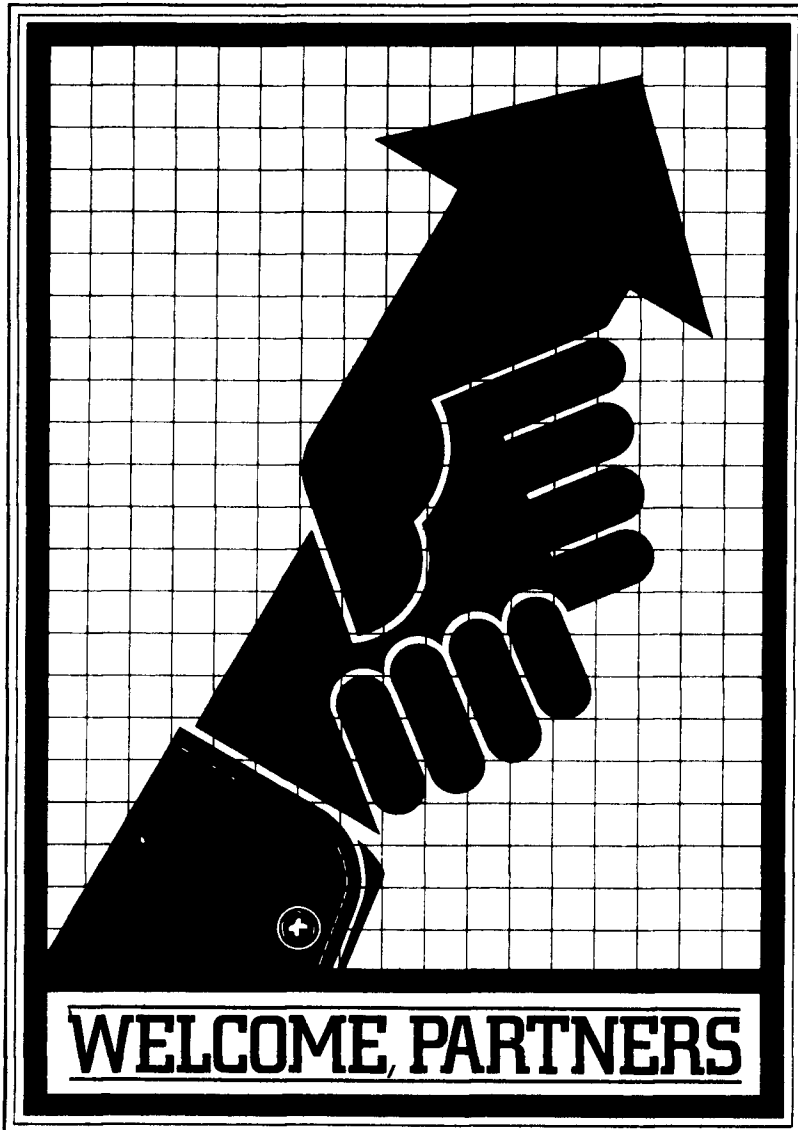
Dairy foods should be a part of every diet. For those advised to eat low-fat diets, than low-fat milk (1% — 115 calories, 2% — 135 calories, skim — 83-90 calories) can be chosen. Low-fat yogurt and cheeses can also be selected.

Without dairy foods, says Dairy Council, people would quickly experience deficiencies of calcium, riboflavin, and probably vitamin D.



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