

'Winter Weakens Bones' Says State Alternate Dairy Princess Rachel Tanis

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CENTRE HALL (Centre Co.)
— "As the temperatures outside drop, staying healthy can become a full-time job," said Rachel Tanis, who is both Centre County and Pennsylvania First Alternate Dairy Princess.

"Experiencing muscle weakness and aching bones during the winter months is not uncommon, yet many times those complaints are dismissed as side effects of depression bought on by the dreariness of winter," Rachel said.

She believes that the solution is to drink milk.

To support her belief, she cited studies published in the "Journal of Bone Mineral Research," that states that lack of sunshine and the tendency to stay indoors during the winter can cause such physical ailments.

When the body is deprived of sunlight, it is unable to produce Vitamin D, which is vital to the body's ability to absorb calcium. A deficiency in Vitamin D results in the failure to deposit calcium in the skeleton, which can lead to softening of the bones and muscular tenderness. The condition is known as rickets in children and osteomalacia in adults.

Because fluid milk is fortified with Vitamin D, it has eliminated rickets among children in this county. But adults who are not milk drinkers are at risk to symptoms of osteomalacia during the winter.

"Aside from fortified milk, other food sources such as egg yolks and liver contain only minimal amounts of the vitamin," Rachel said.

The 19-year-old daughter of Jake and Sally Tanis is always on the lookout to promote the dairy industry.

She's a busy young woman,

who is a sophomore majoring in dairy and animal science and communications at Penn State University.

Because her home is only a few minutes from campus, Rachel lives and works on the family's 250-acre Ideal Holstein Farm. She owns 34 of the family's 200 Holsteins.

"They are putting me through college," Rachel said.

And, the Holsteins are building a herd for the little farm Rachel hopes to own some day.

Unlike most dairy princesses, Rachel said that she did not grow up wanting to be a dairy princess.

But she's always been involved in dairy farming and last year as she reassessed her goals she recognized that she has always appreciated the dairy industry.

"I thought it was time for me to give something back to the industry," Rachel said.

Being a dairy princess gives her plenty of opportunities to encourage people of all ages to use dairy products.

"I love school promotions the best because they (the students) are the future and I can spread a good message to them."

Rachel also spends a good deal of time collecting dairy-rich recipes to hand out and to send to the media for publication. One of her favorite recipes is Cheddar Cheese Soup.

"My mother made up an ice cream punch recipe that everyone loves," Rachel said.

The recipe for Sally's Fuzzy Punch and some of Rachel's favorites to ensure people get an adequate supply of Vitamin D intake throughout the winter follow.



Pennsylvania Alternate Dairy Princess Rachel Tanis says her 34 Holsteins are financing her college education.



Rachel Tanis is always eager to share recipes to encourage the use of dairy products. Here, she assists in dairy promotion at the Pennsylvania Farm Show recently.

RICH OLD-FASHIONED HOT CHOCOLATE

Yield: 2 cups

4 ounces semi-sweet chocolate morsels
2 teaspoons butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups milk

Stir chocolate, butter, and vanilla together in a double-boiler until completely melted and smooth, then slowly add milk. Do not allow to boil. Serve over a marshmallow and garnish with a dash of nutmeg or cinnamon.

HOT CHOCOLATE WITH A "TWIST" GROWN UPS

Hot Chocolate Cherry Cordial: Whisk in 1 1/2 tablespoons kirsch (cherry-flavored brandy) just before serving. Garnish with whipped cream and a maraschino cherry.

Mocha Sensation: Stir in 1 tablespoon instant freeze-dried coffee and 1 1/2 tablespoons coffee-flavored liqueur just before serving. Serve with whipped cream topped with crushed amaretti cookies.

Orange-Spice Cocoa: Stir in 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg and 1 1/2 tablespoons orange-flavored liqueur just before serving. Garnish with orange peel or slice.

SALLY'S FUZZY PUNCH

1/2 gallon vanilla ice cream
1 quart raspberry sherbert
4 cups milk
2 cups peach juice
2-litre bottle raspberry ginger ale

Mix together ice cream, sherbert, milk and peach juice in punch bowl. Pour ginger ale over mixture and serve.



Rachel Tanis, left, with the other state alternate Melissa Bicksler of Berks County work together in dairy promotion.

CHEDDAR CHEESE SOUP

1/4 cup water
10 ounces frozen corn
1 onion, grated
1/2 cup butter
1 carrot, grated
Simmer the preceding ingredients for 10 minutes.
Add:
2 cans cream of potato soup
2 cups milk
1/2 cup milk
1 cup cheddar cheese
Simmer until cheese melts but do not boil.

HOT APPLE BUTTER PUNCH

Yield: 4 3/4 cups

1 quart milk
2/3 cup apple butter
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Combine all ingredients in a 2-quart saucepan. Heat slowly to serving temperature. Punch can also be served cold.

BROCCOLI SOUP

2 bunches of broccoli
1 onion
1/2 cup flour
2 cans of chicken broth
1 1/2 to 2 quarts milk
2 cups white milk cheddar cheese
Steam 2 bunches of broccoli in a little water. Saute 1 onion in butter until transparent. Add 1/2 cup flour. Slowly add 2 cans chicken broth. Add broccoli and approximately 1 1/2 to 2 quarts of milk. Add 2 cups grated mild Cheddar cheese (white). (Add cream if desired-1 pint.) Salt and pepper to taste.

For extra flavor add chicken bouillon.

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