

# Agriculture Insights



**The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry**

Phone (717) 397-3531

## SCHOOL MILK PILOT TEST A NUTRITION SOLUTION FOR CHILDREN

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The State of the Student

While in school, children learn lifelong academic, social, and behavioral lessons, including good nutrition. It is a setting where positive dietary habits can be taught and reinforced.

School milk is an essential part of healthy nutrition for children; however, milk consumption has declined drastically over the last two decades. Snacks and soft drinks, with limited nutritional value, have gained access to most school facilities, offering students many alternatives to the more nutritionally balanced National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Here are some of the ways children's health has been impacted:

- Children are overweight, yet undernourished.
- Only 2 percent of youth meet all the recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid; 16 percent don't meet any of the recommendations.
- Only 30 percent of school children consume the recommended milk group servings.
- Nearly nine out of 10 teenage girls and seven out of 10 teenage boys do not meet the recommended daily intake of calcium.
- Two thirds of U.S. schools allow students to buy food and drinks from vending machines and school stores during lunch.

### Role of Milk in Children's Health

School milk is a complete nutrient package, from protein to potassium, and of course, calcium. When children drink milk at lunch, they have higher intakes of several critical nutrients — Vitamin A, E, calcium and zinc. In addition, milk provides more calcium and protein per penny than other foods served on school lunch

menus.

### Putting Milk to the Test

The yearlong School Milk Pilot Test, initiated through a partnership between National Dairy Council and American School Food Service Association, was conducted to determine how milk needed to be enhanced to get students to choose it over other beverage options in the school cafeteria. The test encompassed 100,000 children from 146 schools in 18 districts in 12 U.S. markets, and it included the following enhancements to the school milk program:

- Contemporary plastic packaging in 8 and/or 10, 12, and 16 ounces.
- Minimum of three flavors offered: white, chocolate, and usually strawberry.
- Served ice-cold, visibly displayed.
- Offered in three locations: meal line, a la carte, and vending machines.

### How The New Face Of Milk Performed

- Milk sales across all test schools increased 18 percent; 15 percent in elementary schools and 22 percent in secondary schools, far exceeding expectations.
- 86 percent of the increase came from the main line; 14 percent from a la carte/vending.
- Students drank more of the milk they took; increased milk sales combined with decreased milk waste yielded a 39 percent increase in milk consumption at secondary schools and a 35 percent increase at elementary schools.
- Offering students a third flavor provided more of the incremental sales.
- Secondary school students preferred the larger (10-ounce vs. 8-ounce) bottle.

After the

enhanced milk program was offered, more students participated in the National School Lunch Program. In secondary schools, about 5 percent more students came through the meal line — the largest increase in decades. In elementary test schools, there was a 1.5 percent increase in average daily participation in the school meal.

### Improve Student Nutrition At Your School

It's the combination that optimizes milk's presence and appeal and unlocks the amazing potential of the enhanced milk program. Schools should consider enhancing the packaging, adding flavor variety, and increasing visibility of milk throughout the cafeteria (on the main line, in the a la carte line, and in vending) and throughout the school.

Contact Ellen Fuller, RD at Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association at (215) 627-8800, ext. 14 or efuller@mid4u.org for assistance to enhance the school milk program in your schools.

Editor's note: This article was written by Deborah A. Benner of Yipee! Farms, a 650 head dairy operation in Rapho Township. Benner serves on the National Dairy Board, Lancaster Farm Bureau Board, and the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ag Committee.

### 27th Annual Agricultural Banquet

Harvest season is a time to give thanks and celebrate our good fortune. Join The Chamber as it celebrates and recognizes the people who make Lancaster County's agriculture community renowned worldwide at the 27th Annual Agricultural Industry Banquet, Nov. 24 at Willow Valley.

This highly-anticipated event attracted more than 800 local farmers, business professionals, and local officials last year, making it the largest chamber banquet honoring the agricultural industry and a must-attend event. Even those not directly involved with agriculture will find the evening very enjoyable! Anne Shannon of WGAL-TV will serve as the master of ceremony

for the evening.

The theme for this year's banquet is "Embracing Change." Popular international speaker and farmer Jolene Brown will entertain and enlighten during her presentation, "Normal Doesn't Live Here Anymore." Brown will discuss the importance of increased vision and adaptability as we market to diverse, deserving, and demanding customers. Hailing from Iowa, Brown has not only earned the Certified Speaking Professional Award from the National Speakers association, but her unique insights as a farmer have endeared her to audiences across America and abroad!

The evening will begin with a reception at 5 p.m., followed by dinner and the evening's presentation, which will include the recognition of the Century Farm Awards and the George C. Delp Award recipients.

### Century Farm Applications Sought

Applications are being accepted for The Century Farm Award. The Century Farms Program recognizes those farms and farm families which have done so much to contribute to

Pennsylvania's heritage.

The pioneering spirit of farmers remains a key component to the success of Pennsylvania's agriculture. The Century Farms Program emphasizes pride in the contributions of these farms that have remained in the same family for more than 100 years as a symbol to remind us of how far our agriculture has come and where we need to go in the future.

If you would like to apply or if you know of anyone who would qualify, please contact the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension at (717) 394-6851 for a brief application.

### 2003 George C. Delp Award Nominations Being Accepted

This award is presented annually to a resident of Lancaster County who has made a significant personal contribution to the agricultural community. If you would like to nominate someone who has demonstrated outstanding dedication and commitment to preserving and enhancing agriculture in Lancaster County, contact June Mengel at (717) 397-3531 for a nomination Form.

## Trust Kicks Off Harvest Appeal

(Continued from Page A39)

The goal for this division is \$10,000.

The final division for the campaign is the Farmland Partners. This division includes all members who are invited to contribute by year's end toward the \$45,000 goal set for this division.

Michael Arno, CEO of Community Hospital of Lancaster, serves as Business Leadership Division chair. He will be contacting general business donors on behalf of the Trust.

The campaign runs until the end of 2003.

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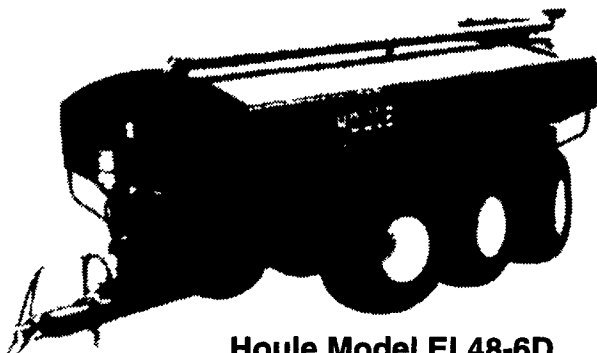
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