

FINAL



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**JOINT STATEMENT  
THE SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION AND NATIONAL DAIRY COUNCIL SHARE FINDINGS  
OF NEW REPORT SHOWING STUDENTS DRINKING MORE LOW-FAT AND FAT-FREE MILK**

Nearly 80 percent of students in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) chose low-fat or fat-free milk in 2005, compared to less than 30 percent in the early 1990s, according to a report analyzing U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data released today.<sup>1</sup>

Unpublished data from USDA's third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment (SNDA III)<sup>2</sup> show that most schools voluntarily follow the recommendation which was also outlined in the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA) to encourage more consumption of low-fat and fat-free dairy. The current DGA recommends three servings of dairy every day for most Americans.<sup>3</sup>

Significant changes in consumption patterns have developed between the first SNDA report from 1992 and the most current data from 2005. In the 1992 assessment, 28.6 percent of students who drank milk chose either low-fat or fat-free milk, while the latest SNDA data show that 79.2 percent of milk-drinking students now choose low-fat or fat-free milk. (See appendix below for further details).

"These findings suggest that schools are voluntarily encouraging low-fat and fat-free white and flavored milk and students are enjoying these nutritious offerings more than ever before," said Katie Wilson, PhD, SNS, School Nutrition Association (SNA) President. SNA announced the report along with National Dairy Council (NDC). "We are continuing to work closely with schools to encourage that they offer a variety of nutrient-rich milk, cheese and yogurt products that meet the National School Lunch Program nutritional criteria and taste great so students will consume them."

The series of SNDA reports determine the extent to which schools are following NSLP guidelines and examine students' changing taste preferences in school meals. The study released today was prepared by ENVIRON International Corporation using data from the SNDA reports.

Today's report also found consumption changes among flavored milk drinkers. While in 1992 2% milk was the most popular among flavored milk drinkers, the majority of flavored milk drinkers now consume low-fat or fat-free milk in schools.

According to the DGA, small amounts of sugars added to nutrient-rich foods, such as low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, may increase consumption of these foods by enhancing the taste, so overall nutrient intake is improved without contributing excessive calories. In fact, a recent study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* found that children who drink either flavored or plain milk consume more nutrients and have a lower or comparable body mass index (BMI) than children who don't drink milk.<sup>4</sup>

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Dairy foods such as low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt are nutrient-rich and provide a significant source of nutrients for growing children and teens. In fact, dairy foods offer a unique nutrient package of nine essential nutrients – calcium, potassium, phosphorus, protein, vitamins A, D and B12, riboflavin and niacin (niacin equivalents). The DGA identified low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products as a “Food Group to Encourage” because milk products provide three of the five nutrients that most children’s diets lack – calcium, magnesium and potassium.<sup>5</sup>

Since the overwhelming majority of children do not consume the DGA’s recommended three servings of low-fat or fat-free milk or milk products per day, increasing children’s consumption of milk to recommended levels can be a key to improving diet quality.<sup>6</sup>

NDC works with schools across the country to help encourage more consumption of all food groups to encourage, including low-fat and fat-free dairy products, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. “Milk, cheese and yogurt are especially important for children to grow up strong and healthy,” said Jean Ragalie, R.D., L.D., executive vice president, Child Nutrition and Fitness Initiative for the NDC. “Many children today are overweight, yet undernourished and miss out on key nutrients like calcium, magnesium, potassium and vitamin D. It is important that kids are encouraged to drink milk with meals, at home and at school, to get the nutrients they need.”

Many schools across the country struggle with tighter budgets, yet nutrient-rich foods such as milk are a good nutritional value because they pack in many essential nutrients at a low cost per serving.

For more information on the health benefits of dairy foods, visit [www.NationalDairyCouncil.org](http://www.NationalDairyCouncil.org) or visit [www.NutritionExplorations.org](http://www.NutritionExplorations.org) for details on the “New Look of School Milk” program. For information on SNA, visit [www.SchoolNutrition.org](http://www.SchoolNutrition.org).

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### **About the National Dairy Council**

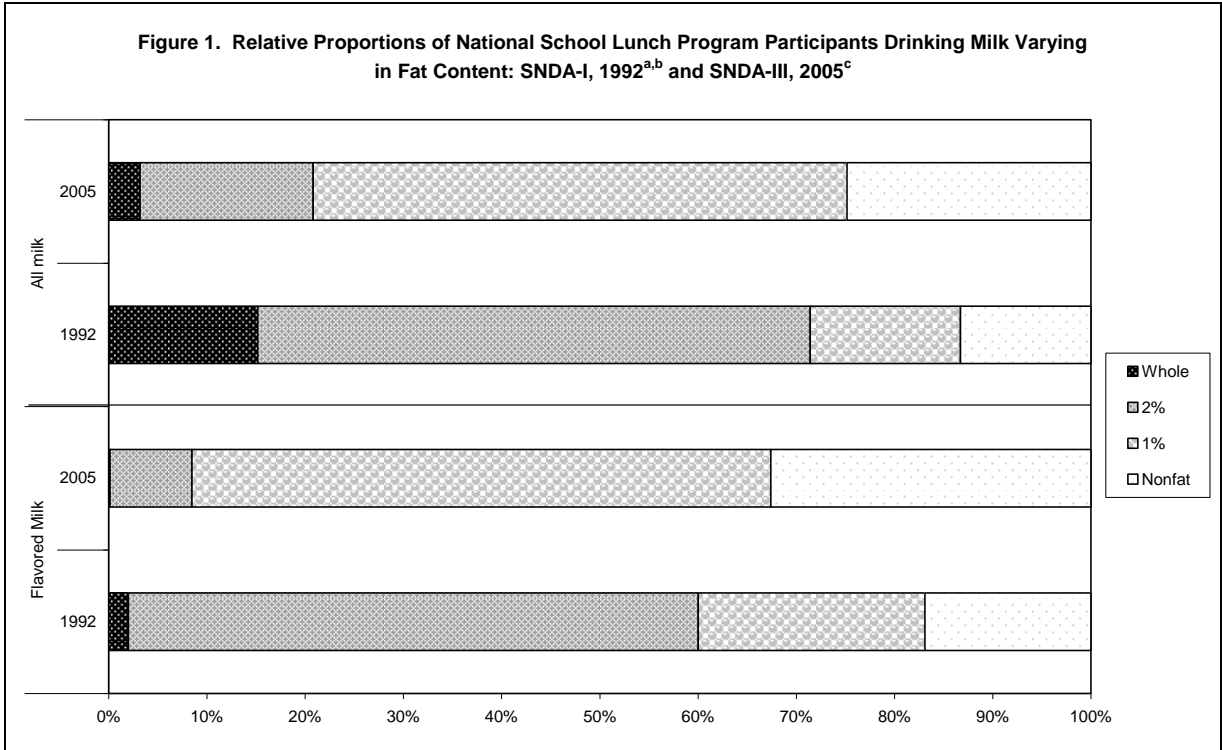
National Dairy Council® (NDC) is the nutrition research, education and communications arm of Dairy Management Inc™. On behalf of U.S. dairy farmers, NDC provides science-based nutrition information to, and in collaboration with, a variety of stakeholders committed to fostering a healthier society, including health professionals, educators, school nutrition directors, academia, industry, consumers and media.

Established in 1915, NDC is dedicated to educating the public on the health benefits of consuming milk and milk products throughout a person’s lifespan. For more information, visit [www.nationaldairycouncil.org](http://www.nationaldairycouncil.org).

### **About the School Nutrition Association (SNA)**

The School Nutrition Association is a national, non-profit professional organization representing more than 55,000 members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the country. The Association and its members are dedicated to feeding children safe and nutritious meals. Founded in 1946, SNA is the only association devoted exclusively to protecting and enhancing children’s health and well being through school meals and sound nutrition education.

**Appendix**



<sup>a</sup>Source: Personal communication, John Endahl, FNS, 10/08.

<sup>b</sup>Data were compiled by Mathematica Policy Research.

<sup>c</sup>Data were compiled by ENVIRON International Corporation.

<b>Table 1.</b> <b>Percentages of</b> <b>National School Lunch Program Participant Milk Consumers</b> <b>Drinking Different Milk Types:</b> <b>SNDA-I, 1992 and SNDA-III, 2005</b>		
Milk Type	SNDA-I, 1992 <sup>a,b</sup>	SNDA-III, 2005 <sup>c</sup>
	%	
Unflavored milk	40.2	34.0
Flavored milk	59.8	66.0
Whole	15.2	3.2
Unflavored	14.0	3.1
Flavored	1.2	0.1
2%	56.3	17.6
Unflavored	21.6	12.1
Flavored	34.7	5.5
1%	15.3	54.3
Unflavored	1.5	15.4
Flavored	13.8	38.9
Nonfat	13.3	24.8
Unflavored	3.2	3.3
Flavored	10.1	21.5

<sup>a</sup>Source: Personal communication, John Endahl, FNS, 10/08.

<sup>b</sup>Data were compiled by Mathematica Policy Research.

<sup>c</sup>Data were compiled by ENVIRON International Corporation.

1 School Nutrition Association and National Dairy Council. *School Milk: Fat Content Has Declined Dramatically Since the Early 1990s*. ENVIRON International Corporation for SNA and NDC, December 2008 (unpublished).

2 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research, Nutrition, and Analysis. *School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study-III: Volume I: School Foodservice, School Food Environment, and Meals Offered and Served*, by Anne Gordon, Mary Kay Crepinsek, Renée Nogales, and Elizabeth Condon. Project Officer: Patricia McKinney. Alexandria, VA: 2007.

3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 2005. 6th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005.

4 Murphy MM, Douglass JS, Johnson RK, Spence LA. Drinking flavored or plain milk is positively associated with nutrient intake and is not associated with adverse effects on weight status in U.S. children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 2008; 108:631-639.

5 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 2005. 6th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005.

6 National Dairy Council, unpublished data based on the National Health and Nutrition Survey (NHANES), 1999-2002.