

## 2004 After School Snack Report

### Goals

The National Dairy Council, in conjunction with the School Nutrition Association (formerly American School Food Service Association) and the Child Nutrition Foundation, conducted a study to understand the scope of after school snack operations. The information will be used to develop and improve future after school snack programs. Little information is currently available on operational practices including, staffing, food storage availability, and frequency of snacks served in after school programs.

After school programs have a significant impact on children's lives. Participation in after school programs can improve student performance in standardized tests, improve attendance at school and improve scores on proficiency tests.<sup>1</sup> They can also have a profound nutritional impact where snacks are served, nutrition education is conducted, and opportunities for physical activity exist.

The current report provides an exploratory description of operational procedures in after school snack program operations.

### Methodology

An online questionnaire was sent to approximately 4,617 ASFSA district director and major city director members. The questionnaire included 15 questions that assessed demographics, operations, staffing, food storage and frequency of dairy snacks served. An email was sent to members with a direct link to the questionnaire inviting them to participate on the condition that they operate an after school snack program. Directors were informed of a chance to win one of five \$50 gift cards to the ASFSA Emporium upon completion of the questionnaire. The study was conducted from June 26 - July 16, 2004. Survey Monkey was used as the online data collection and analysis tool. Microsoft Excel was used for open-ended data analysis and graphics.

### Data Coding

The open-ended responses were coded as follows: Cheese flavorings, including cheese crackers, goldfish, dolphins, etc. were not coded as cheese snacks, but rather as crackers. Cheese in mixed foods including pizza was also not coded as cheese; however, the combination of "cheese and crackers" was included as a reported cheese item. Milk of various flavorings and fat contents was coded as a general milk category. Because the survey did not attempt to assess the different types of milk served, analysis based solely on respondents offering information on milk type would have been inaccurate.

### Results and Discussion

A total of **497** district directors and major city directors participated in the current study. Given that many of these child nutrition professionals may have been on summer vacation, the number of responses was considerably higher than the estimated target goal of 300. Most management-level child nutrition professionals work a 10-month schedule, according to a recent study conducted by the American School Food Service Association.<sup>2</sup>

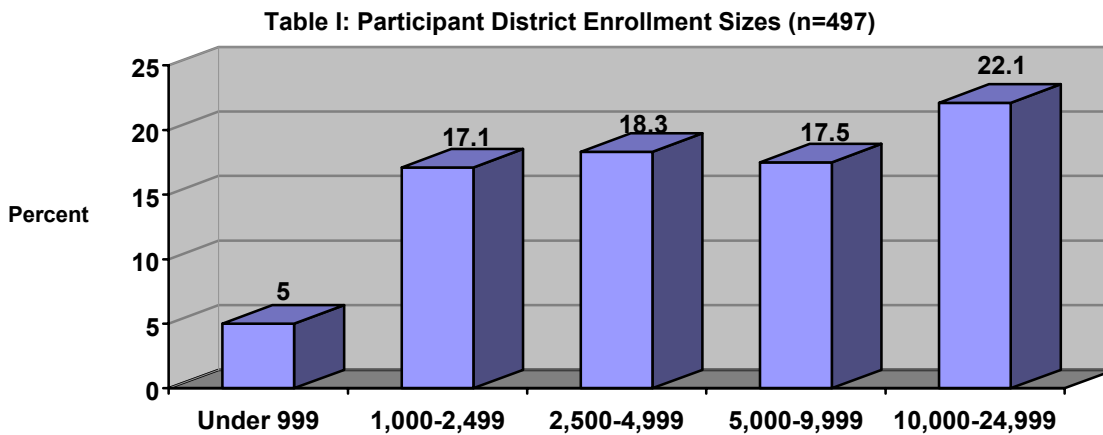
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<sup>1</sup> Food Research and Action Center After School Guide. Supported by National Dairy Council. 2004.

<sup>2</sup> ASFSA 2004 Compensation and Benefits Study, Alexandria, VA

### Demographics

The participants represented 48 states in every ASFSA region. Hawaii and North Dakota were not represented. The participant sample was fairly distributed across district enrollment sizes as shown in Table I. However, there was a much smaller representation (5%) of districts with under 999 enrolled students.



### Operations

Most participants operated an after school snack program as a sponsor (administrator) through the National School Lunch Program (74%). The remaining operated as sponsors through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, local or state funded programs, and non-government funded programs (Kids Cafes, churches, etc); 11%, 10%, and 5%, respectively. Few of the respondents operated as vendors—18% for NSLP, 6% for CACFP, and 7% each for the local or state funded programs and non-government funded programs.

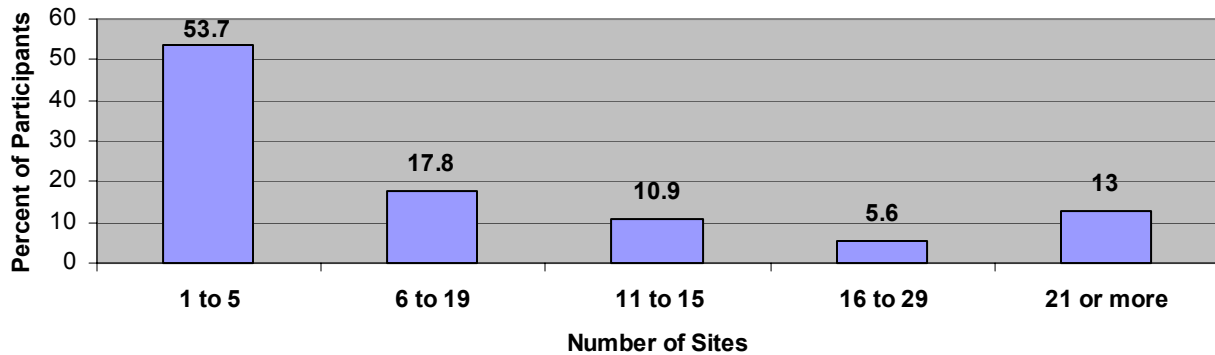
As of FY 2003, over 16,000 public schools and over 700 private schools served snacks through the National School Lunch Program<sup>3</sup>. The numbers of both public and private schools that serve after school snacks through National School Lunch Program have increased steadily since FY 1999.

The majority of respondents (73.4%) operated after school programs five days a week, while approximately 11% operated three days or less.

Over half of the respondents reported that they provide snacks to five sites or less. Less than 18% reported serving snacks to 6 to 19 sites (Table II).

<sup>3</sup> National Data Bank (NDB), USDA/Food and Nutrition Service, June 2004

**Table II: Number of Sites Participants Provide Snacks To**



The average numbers of snacks served per day per district are listed in Table III. The majority served an average of 500 snacks or less per district.

**Table III**

Average Number of Snacks Served	Percent of Respondents
Less than 99	24.4%
100-199	22.6%
<b>200-499</b>	<b>26.2%</b>
500-999	13.5%
1,000 or more	13.2%

**Cost Per Snack**

Information on the “average” cost per snack was requested—respondents were asked to report on food cost only. The net average food cost per snack was **44 cents** per snack.

**After School Program Staffing**

The majority of participants reported that snacks are distributed to students by after school staff (86%). Nearly one-third of respondents (30.8%) reported that foodservice staff distributes snacks, with the remaining being volunteer staff (4.9%) and “other” staff (4.1%). Although more detail is not available on the types of volunteers involved in the program, potential could exist to involve community leaders, professional role models, or National Dairy Council staff in periodic volunteer distribution.

Over 80% of respondents reported that after school program staff record snack counts, and an additional 50% reported that foodservice staff are also involved in recording snacks. Approximately 3.6% of directors reported that volunteer staff record snacks, while 3.1% reported that “other” staff record snacks.

**Food Storage**

Nearly all participants reported having access to both cold storage (87%) and dry storage (92%) at all sites. Approximately 9% reported having no access to cold storage 4% reported no access to dry storage at some sites. Additionally, 4% reported having no access to dry or cold storage at any sites.

Access to cold storage is important for serving perishable foods, such as milk, yogurt, or cheese after school snack programs. Since these snack items are of significant nutritional

value, districts without access to cold storage may be encouraged to provide shelf-stable forms of dairy products. Program sponsors and staff may or may not be aware of what types of shelf-stable dairy items exist. However, the potential impact on food cost should also be addressed.

Most participants reported that they store both cold food and dry food leftovers rather than throw them away (Table IV).

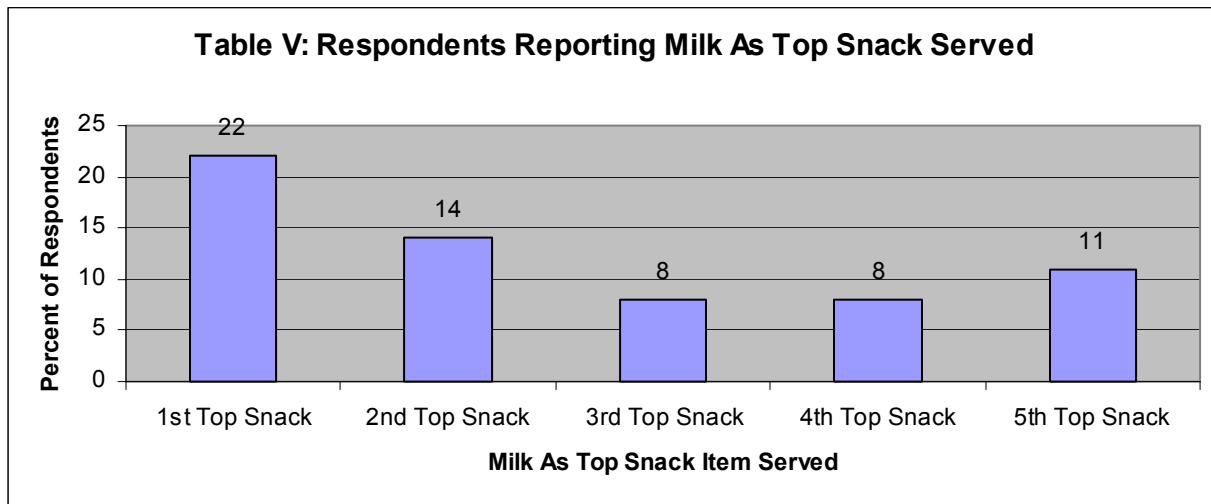
**Table IV**

<b>What is Done with Leftovers?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
<b>Dry and cold food items are both stored</b>	<b>64.8%</b>
Only dry food items are stored	9.1%
Only cold food items are stored	.8%
All remaining food items are thrown out	14.6%
Other	10.7%

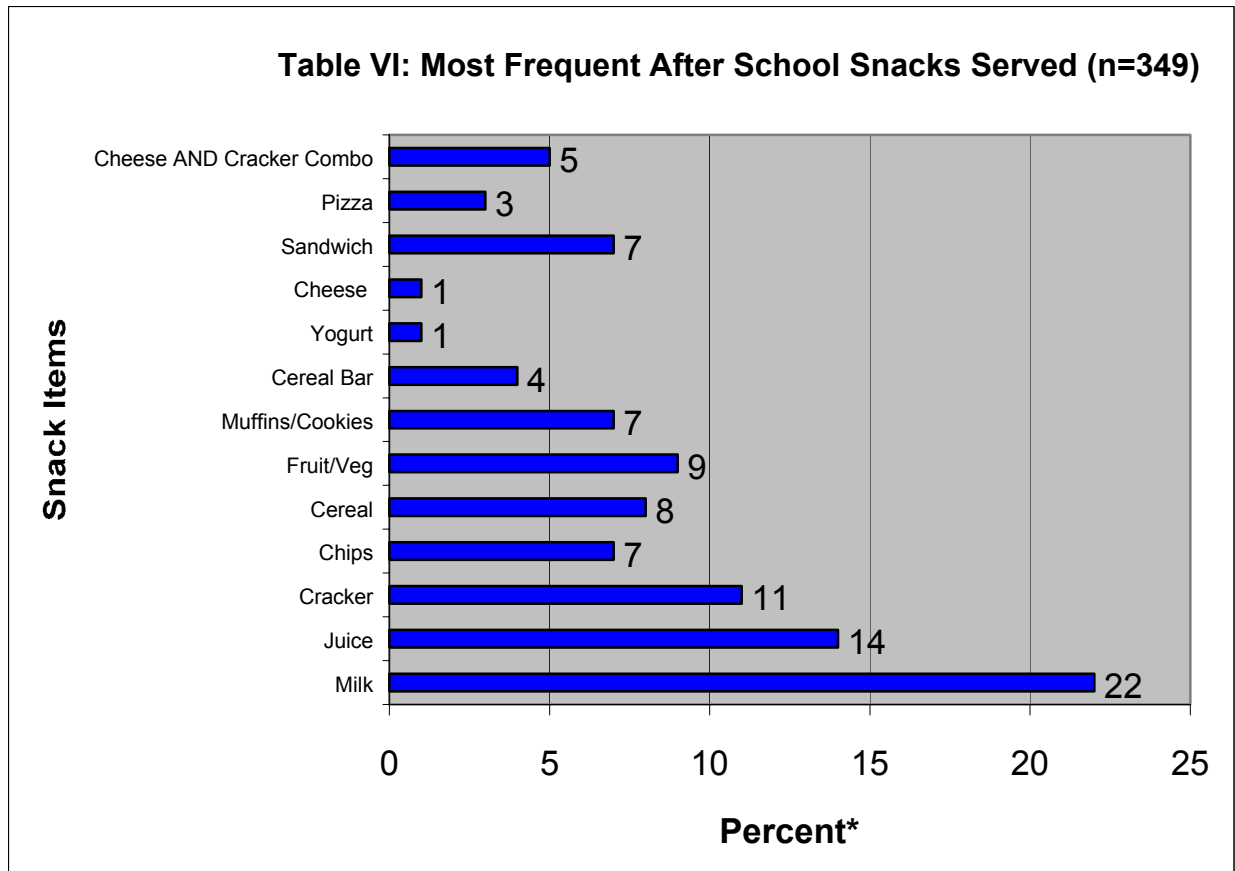
Although most food items are stored, less cold food items are stored than dry food items. This raises an issue for cold storage products including yogurt, cheese, and milk. When cold storage is available, dairy products and other perishable foods could be stored for use later. For programs that operate more frequently, there may be ample opportunity to save and re-serve food items before they expire.

**Top Snack Items Served**

Milk was reported as a top snack served in all categories of the top five hierarchies. Approximately 22% of respondents reported that milk was the top snack served in after school snack programs; 14% reported that it was the second top snack item served (Table V).

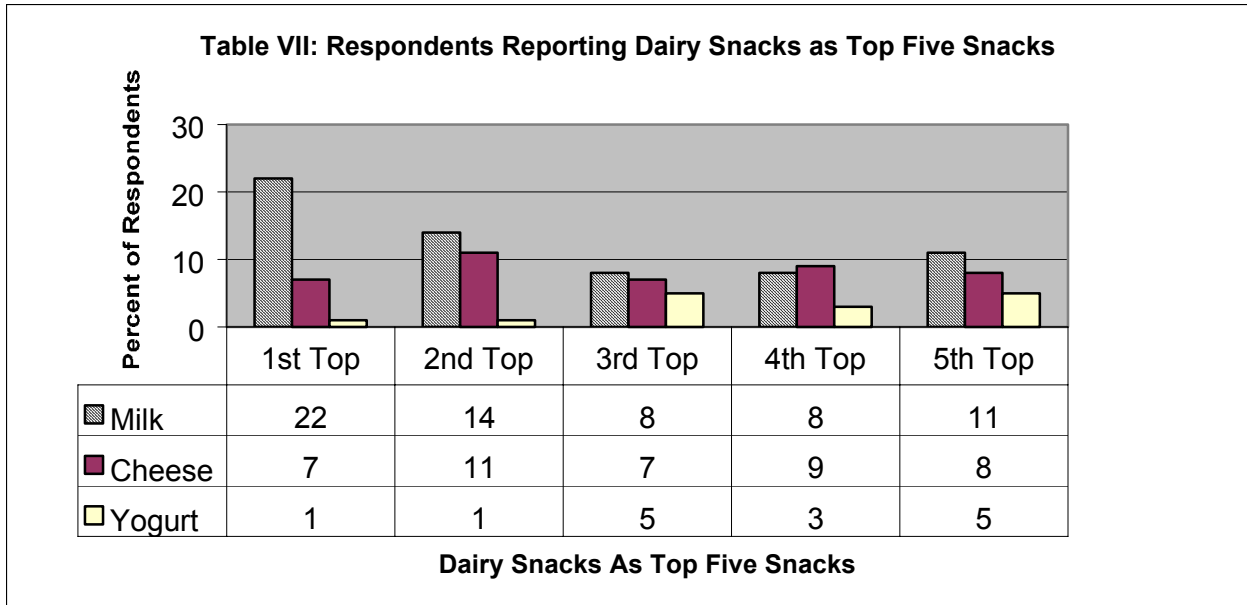


A close competitor for milk was juice; 14% of respondents reported that it was the first top snack item served. Crackers, fruits and vegetables, cereal, chips and sandwiches (peanut butter and jelly or meat) were also frequently served as after school snacks (Table VI).



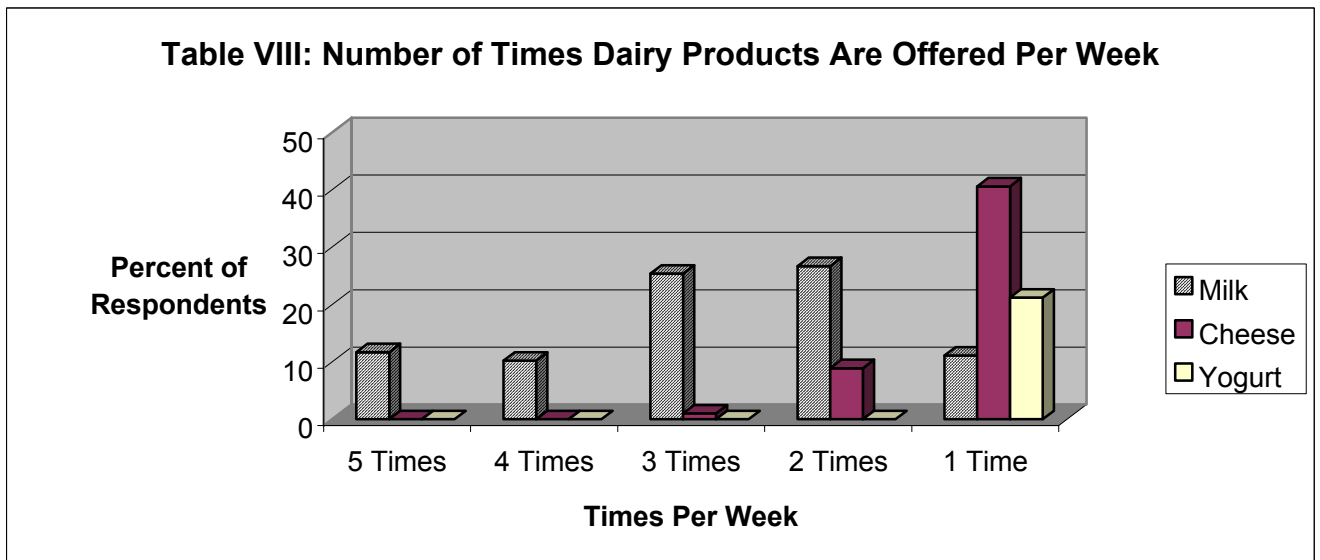
\*Sum of percents will not equal 100—some snack items were served in combination with others. For example, milk and crackers were served together in some instances. Therefore, the total number of snacks will be greater than 349. Percents reflect the number of respondents.

Milk was most frequently reported as a top snack item among dairy products, followed by cheese and yogurt (Table VII). Milk was also more frequently reported in the first and second top snack categories. Cheese was most commonly reported by respondents as the second top snack item served. However, cheese was also reported in all categories of hierarchy for top snack items served. Yogurt was most commonly reported as the third, fourth and fifth top snack item.



**Frequency of Dairy Products Served In After School Snack Programs**

Milk was the only dairy product offered every single day of the week (Table VIII). Yogurt was reportedly only offered once per week, whereas cheese was offered three times per week. Milk was most commonly offered 2-3 times per week. However, the number of times these products are served could be impacted by the number of days of operation. Yet, most after school snack programs in the current study did operate five days per week.



## **Strengths and Limitations**

The current ASFSA study provides insight on a rarely reviewed topic: after school snack program operations. Although cost-effective evaluations have been conducted, little data is available regarding operational procedures from various after school snack program administrators, such as the USDA and Second Harvest. The paucity of related research proved difficult in comparing the current data to other after school snack program operations. The current study explores various aspects of operations, including staffing, snacks served, number of days programs are operated, and food storage availability. Additionally, the response rate was considerably high, and representative of district enrollment sizes and geographic regions.

The main limitation of the study was the lack of ability to stratify data for further analysis. Survey Monkey is a quick and easy online survey tool, but is limited in its analysis capabilities. However, the current study was descriptive and exploratory in purpose, and the data analysis meets the information needed as outlined in the project goals.