



Families give butter the thumbs-up after trying their hand at butter churning with the help of SLDDC nutrition educator Ashley Waters.



SLDDC in Action is a quarterly newsletter produced by the St. Louis District Dairy Council.

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Dairy Month Broadcasts Benefits to Consumers

SLDDC helped Illinois and Missouri consumers learn the journey milk takes from the farm to the table during June Dairy Month. Here are a few highlights:

More than 600 consumers met SLDDC Board Vice President Jerry Knebel of Pocahtonas, IL, and his cow Lisa at the St. Louis Science Center's grand opening of the GROW exhibit. The event featured milk taste-testing and let kids try their hand at churning butter.

"Having a dairy farmer on-site was great," says SLDDC executive director Margie Graham. "We can talk about dairy foods being wholesome till the cows come home, but it becomes more personal when people can churn the butter and hear from the farmer that milk only takes 48 hours to travel from the farm to the

grocery store."

More than 200 baseball fans covered the bases on milk's journey with the help of SLDDC nutrition educator Monica Nyman. SLDDC partnered with McLean (IL) County's Barnyard Discoveries mobile animal trailer to help celebrate dairy at the Peoria Chiefs baseball game on Father's Day.

The message that dairy is a healthy, affordable, and convenient food reached millions of consumers throughout Illinois and Missouri via radio interviews, TV food demonstrations, and local newspaper stories.

"Our message to consumers is that innovation has taken dairy beyond the breakfast table," Nyman says. "Milk is an anytime on-the-go beverage that's great for all ages."

School Cafeteria Directors Take Field Trip to Milk Processing Plant

How do you check for butterfat, and what is the cost of equipment? These were some of the questions asked by school cafeteria directors at SLDDC's first milk processing plant tour on May 24 in Granite City, IL.

The tour was held in response to a high level of interest from cafeteria directors.

"We had some people say they would travel up to 3 hours to tour a milk processing plant," says SLDDC executive director Margie Graham. School cafeteria directors manage the school's nutrition program and decide how much milk to order and what kind of dairy to serve in the cafeteria.

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SLDDC Feeds Consumer Curiosity about Where Food Comes From



Consumer interest in how food is grown continues to climb. A quick look at grocery stores shelves reveals that food manufacturers know it! And they're not alone. Schools now recognize that parents want to know how student meals are created. To satisfy the demand, a district in Florida offers monthly tours of the

school cafeteria to parents. The tours allow parents to ask questions, and to see firsthand the steps involved in feeding their children.

SLDDC has long been a proponent of “show and tell” when it comes to promoting dairy foods. As credentialed nutrition professionals, our team is equipped to explain the research backing dairy’s wide range of health benefits. As local dairy advocates, we are also uniquely positioned to deliver the person-to-person contact needed to build trust.

“Showing” another side of dairy was one reason behind our processing plant tour held this spring. The impact of the tour went beyond simply answering questions. It gave our school contacts a genuine look at how dairy foods are made. It allowed them to see directly the industry’s commitment to producing wholesome, safe, high-quality products. And it inspired trust.

Inspiring trust in the dairy industry demands that we continually connect with consumers in new ways. Through fresh initiatives like Adopt-A-Cow and the Cooking with Coco recipes, we’re doing more than tapping into the growing interest about where food comes from. We’re building confidence in the hardworking people who grow it from the ground up.

Margie

Margie Graham
SLDDC Executive Director

Field Trip, continued

“A lot of the attendees are familiar with the farm side of dairy production, but they don’t know what happens at the processing plant,” Graham says. “It helps people feel secure about their food when they can see where it comes from and what happens to it at the plant.” Graham notes that many of the attendees were surprised by how many inspections and tests are run on the milk before it leaves the plant.

“This is real life — this isn’t a story or a movie about how milk gets to the grocery story. This is it,” Graham says. “Firsthand experiences go a long way in building consumer trust.”

Cafeteria directors see where the milk trucks unload during their tour of a milk processing plant, Granite City, IL.



Scholarship Winners Credit Childhood Chores for Adult Success

From hard work to perseverance, the 2016 SLDDC scholarship winners know that they have what it takes to succeed in college and beyond — thanks to milking cows 365 days a year.

“Holidays? Snow days? Excessive heat days? These phrases do not exist on a dairy farm,” says Kendall Lintker of Venedy, IL. Lintker is the daughter of Carl and Lisa Lintker and studies nursing at Illinois State University in Normal. She says that she learned early in life that she needed to work hard to succeed in life.

“It didn’t take long for me, as a young child, to realize that long hours and hard work are needed to build a successful dairy farm,” she says. “My personal skills and character have both been impacted in a positive way because of dairy farming.”

Milk Is Off to the Races at Community Events

From handing out chocolate milk to runners as they cross the finish line to sampling cheese with Illinois youth, here’s a taste of how dairy is staying front and center in your communities:

High school students at the annual Illinois Family, Career, Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Spring Conference in February attended dairy nutrition sessions led by SLDDC nutrition educator Joyce Fikri to learn dairy nutrition and how to taste-test cheese.

In Jackson County, IL, SLDDC nutrition educator Laura Morton handed out chocolate milk to more than 200 runners as they crossed the finish line at the Moooving On 5K on April 2. The race was organized by the Jackson County Farm Bureau Women’s Committee.

SLDDC provided recipes and nutrition tips to 3,500 girls from over 180 community sites who ran in the Girls on the Run 5K in downtown St. Louis on May 7.

Collin Smith of Pinckneyville, IL, agrees. Smith, the son of John and Karen Smith, is studying agribusiness management and finance at the University of Illinois. He says that dairy farming taught him to get up earlier than anyone else, and to remain dedicated to every job that he starts.

“The truth is that dairy farming did not just give me the abilities to get to a university, it also gave me the skills and approach to life that I need to thrive amongst the best and brightest from around the world.”

Fourteen students from Illinois and Missouri applied for the SLDDC scholarship that is given to support the education of students with a dairy background and to encourage future leaders.

Sharing the Love

On behalf of the Board of Education and the entire Webster Groves School District, I want to express how much we appreciate and value what you do to help our students achieve wellness and academic success. The nutrition lessons that your organization provides have been an important experience and education for our students.

Thank you so much again.

Dr. Sarah Booth Riss
Superintendent of Schools
Webster Groves School District
Webster Groves, MO



Cheese sampling is a hit with these high school students that attended the annual FCCLA Spring Conference.

More than 250 adults and children enjoyed cold chocolate milk and learned the latest in dairy nutrition from SLDDC nutrition educator Monica Nyman at the Illinois Farm Bureau’s annual 5K and kids’ fun run on May 14 in Bloomington, IL.

SLDDC Leads the Way on Farm-to-School Trend

Fortified with dairy resources, SLDDC nutrition educators met the demand for early childhood education, dairy facts, and local food this spring.

Adopt-A-Cow was a popular resource for the 350 early childhood directors and teachers at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conference in St. Peters, MO. “SLDDC initiatives offer a unique way to get young kids involved in what goes on at a dairy farm,” says

SLDDC nutrition educator Erin Rich. “This can help foster healthy eaters and smarter consumers.”

More than 100 registered dietitians visited with SLDDC nutrition educator Ashley Waters at the Missouri Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics conference in St. Louis. “Dietitians want to know how to answer clients’ questions about antibiotics, hormones, and organic milk,” Waters says. “They appreciate having the Dairy Myths and Facts sheet and recipes to give to them.”

SLDDC nutrition educator Laura Morton reminded school cafeteria directors that milk is a locally produced food at the first Farm to School Summit, held by Seven Generations Ahead at Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, IL.

“The trend is farm-to-school,” Morton says. “We’re reminding schools that milk is local and that we have the resources to help teach students how milk gets from the farm to the carton.”

Dairy Is ‘In the Bag’ with Kids’ Recipes Initiative

Preschool and kindergarten students are putting on their chef hats and getting a taste of dairy in their classrooms, featuring SLDDC’s new Cooking with Coco recipes.

The initiative features “kid-friendly” recipes — ones that are easy to make and fun to eat, such as ice cream in a bag — and include tips from SLDDC’s mascot Coco the Cow.

“The Cooking with Coco recipes take dairy education one step further by showing kids how they can cook with dairy at home,” says SLDDC program coordinator Ellen Wheeler. Fewer than half of the kids in the US get the recommended 3 servings of dairy every day.

“Our goal is to lay the foundation for healthy eating and to help teachers remind kids to get their dairy every day,” she says. “Early childhood is when kids are developing their likes and dislikes of food.”

Teachers also receive a tip sheet with strategies to encourage kids to try to new foods, such as being a role model for healthy eating and letting kids help prepare meals.

“We want the excitement from making dairy treats in the classroom to carry over and be something that kids want to do at home with their families,” Wheeler says.

“These recipes are a nice addendum to our Healthy Me initiative,” she says. The Healthy Me initiative provides early childhood teachers with resources and games to teach kids about dairy nutrition and healthy living.

New Breakfast Option Is a Smooth Move for School Grant

How do you get kids to eat breakfast in the morning? Include smoothies on the menu, according to City Academy, a private school in St. Louis.

“The school serves a variety of flavors of smoothies 3 times a week for breakfast,” says SLDDC nutrition educator Erin Rich. “And breakfast participation picks up on the smoothie days.”

Unlike most schools that provide breakfast to students only, City Academy encourages parents to have breakfast in the cafeteria with their children.

“The smoothies are a popular option for the parents because it’s a healthy grab ’n’ go option that they can take on their way to work,” Rich says.

Over the first 4 months, the school used more than 5,200 ounces of yogurt to whip up their own smoothie recipes, such as the Berry Blast and the Sunrise Breakfast Smoothie. The school used their Dollars for Dairy grant to purchase an industrial-size blender, and served more than 2,600 smoothies last fall.

“Smoothies are an easy and fun way to help kids get their 3 servings of dairy a day,” Rich says. “This goes a step further when parents also get to taste the smoothies and see that it’s an easy and tasty way to get their daily dairy.”

SLDDC awarded 49 Dollars for Dairy grants for the 2015/16 school year, and reached nearly 29,000 students with dairy-focused projects in the cafeteria.