



After refueling with chocolate milk, the Hartsburg-Emden (IL) volleyball team had plenty of energy to trek to the neighbor's dairy farm to take the winning 2016 Illinois Power Up School of the Year photo.

Volleyball Players Team Up with Local Dairy Cows to Serve Winning Photo

Congratulations to the girls' volleyball team at Hartsburg-Emden (IL) High School—and the Jerseys at Terri Hoerbert's dairy farm—for their winning 2016 Illinois Power Up School of the Year photo.

Hartsburg-Emden was one of 35 schools in Illinois and Missouri that received a Power Up grant to purchase milk and cooling equipment for their team. The Crystal City (MO) High School girls' volleyball team won 2016 Missouri Power Up School of the Year.

Each participating school submitted a photo of how they refuel

with chocolate milk for a chance to win their state's Power Up School of the Year.

"The photo contest promotes excitement and puts the spotlight on the team," says SLDDC nutrition educator Monica Nyman. The winning team receives a banner to hang in the school and is featured in the community newspapers.

"The Power Up initiative encourage athletes to reach for a healthy beverage after practice," Nyman says. Research shows the high-quality protein and nutrients in chocolate milk make it an ideal post-workout drink.

ST. LOUIS DISTRICT DAIRY COUNCIL

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DAIRY FARMERS



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Dental Kits Bring Smiles to School Nurse Offices

More than 500 Illinois and Missouri school nurses used SLDDC's dental health kits to remind students during February—Dental Health Month—that dairy helps build strong teeth.

"We had a great response from school nurses who requested our kits to use in their clinics," says SLDDC program coordinator Ellen Wheeler. The kits include colorful decals for the nurse's office with messages such as "Say Cheese for Healthy Teeth!" and "Want a #1 Smile? Drink Milk!" There are also "itty-bitty" bags labeled "Healthy Teeth, Healthy Me" for students to put a loose tooth in when it comes out at school.

An additional 150 kits were given to dental organizations in Illinois and Missouri to use in their outreach during Dental Health Month.

Milk Cleans Up on Consumer Label Trend



You've likely heard the phrase "clean label" making its way through grocery stores. The once-trendy marketing term

is now a must-have for many food shoppers. A "clean label" may show that a food contains no artificial ingredients, preservatives, or flavors. Or it may reveal a short, easy-to-read ingredients list.

In general, these labels reflect what's not in food, rather than what is. It seems contradictory. Is milk packed with nutrition? Or does it simply have 3 ingredients? The answer to both is: yes! Milk's 9 essential nutrients make it a healthy beverage.

And its 3 ingredients (milk and vitamins A and D) make it a perfect example of wholesome goodness.

Milk hasn't changed; what consumers want to know about it has. And while there is no formal FDA definition of "clean label," one thing is certain: consumer demand for more information from those who grow and process our food is here to stay.

Some years ago, most people bought food based on its taste, price, and convenience. But today's list of considerations is longer. We hear this every day in conversations with teachers, health professionals, and consumers. The questions we field no longer focus on chocolate milk's sugar or the fat content in cheese. They have evolved to include: "How was this made? How far away is the farm where it was grown?"

SLDDC's initiatives continue to showcase dairy's benefits beyond its superior nutrition. Campaigns like Power Up aim to build trust in dairy foods and the people who produce them. And seeing student athletes heralding the benefits of chocolate milk while standing among Jersey cows is proof positive they're hitting the mark.

We believe the "clean label" movement has created a valuable touch point for the dairy industry, and for this organization. As always, we'll take the opportunity to shine the spotlight on dairy's power to meet consumer demand, and we'll run with it. Ready, set, go!

Margie

Margie Graham
SLDDC Executive Director

Farmers' Response Turns Bad News to Good

After reading an editorial in a local newspaper on the dangers of dairy, dairymen from Bond and Clinton counties in Illinois invited the editor to their farm. The result? The editor wrote a follow-up article apologizing to readers and dairy producers.

SLDDC executive director Margie Graham says that this type of response is becoming less uncommon. "Today's consumers want to know what is real," she says. "When people see a farm or hear the science-backed research, then they realize that maybe the information they read on a random website isn't true."

The solution is to respond with education.

"We can't remove all of the inaccurate and misleading articles on the internet," Graham says. "We have to help consumers identify the information that is based on sound science."

SLDDC helps dairy producers develop key messages and is on call to respond to misinformation. SLDDC nutrition educators undergo yearly communication training that includes responding to practice scenarios like the following:

"You decide to sit in on a session about vegan diets, as you know the presenter. Midway through her presentation, she states that 'many people choose to go vegan once they know how farmers treat animals. It's

a moral and ethical decision.' She then offers a study that suggests that dairy foods don't actually help prevent osteoporosis. She asks if anyone has any comments or questions. What do you do?"

"Our charge is to defend dairy from the science and nutrition standpoint," Graham says. "We believe the best person to tell consumers where their food comes from is the farmer. And we are always willing to support them and share our own farm-to-fork knowledge as well."

She says that inviting someone out to their farm is a great example of how dairy farmers are stepping up to the plate and telling their story.

New Team Member Uses Teaching Role to Learn What Educators Need



Registered dietitian Camille Smith joined SLDDC as a nutrition educator in November 2016 to cover 26 counties in

northern Missouri.

She previously taught nutrition and fitness to K–12 students at BJC HealthCare’s School Outreach and Youth Development in St. Louis, and received her master’s in education technology last year from Missouri Baptist University.

Smith explains that in her new role, she is able to use her teaching experience to connect with educators.

She also points out that educating has its own aspect of learning.

“I appreciate that at SLDDC, we frequently seek input from educators, food service directors, and nurses to ensure we are developing resources that support the work they’re doing in schools and to promote dairy,” she says. “It’s a part of our mission to use dairy farmers’ dollars ethically and responsibly. It’s this close personal contact with schools, an SLDDC hallmark, that enables the delivery of relevant dairy programs with real impact.”

Smith grew up in Springfield, IL, and studied dietetics at Fontbonne University in St. Louis. She resides in St. Louis with her husband, Clint, and their daughter Beatrice and son Felix.

Interest in Healthy Bacteria Continues to Grow

More than 150 dietitians learned about dairy’s role in providing probiotics during SLDDC’s live webinar in December 2016 that featured registered dietitian Jaime Capizzi.

The webinar was held in response to high interest from attendees at the annual SLDDC Let’s Talk Dairy event that featured Capizzi’s presentation on probiotics, or healthy bacteria in the body.

“There is an overwhelming amount of research on probiotics—1,591 research articles as of 2015,” says SLDDC nutrition educator Monica Nyman. “Featuring experts like Capizzi is another avenue for us to help health professionals wade through all the information on dairy foods.”

Afterward, 94% of attendees said the webinar made them more comfortable discussing probiotics with their patients and clients.

Fermented dairy foods such as yogurt, gouda cheese, kefir, and buttermilk contain between 1 to 20 strains of good bacteria.

SLDDC Poster Series Targets General Public

A series of 15 mini posters that encourage consumers to choose dairy is making its way around Illinois and Missouri grocery stores, gyms, and wellness centers as part of SLDDC’s National Nutrition Month campaign in March.

“Whether people are out grocery shopping or working out at the gym, this is an easy way to remind them that dairy is local and that it has 9 essential nutrients,” says SLDDC executive director Margie Graham.

SLDDC provided 200 health professionals with the kits to use in their waiting rooms or to display on their bulletin boards. The visuals include



key messages that remind people if they’re lactose intolerant to try aged

cheeses, or that milk has 8 grams of protein in every cup.

Dairy Campaign Hits High Mark for Breakfast

In record numbers, local schools are taking the challenge to drink milk for breakfast as part of SLDDC's campaign during National School Breakfast Week, March 6 to 10, sponsored by the School Nutrition Association.

"984 schools requested SLDDC's materials to use for National School Breakfast Week," says SLDDC program coordinator Ellen Wheeler. School participation has nearly doubled since SLDDC's first breakfast campaign in 2012, she says.

Each school receives decals to decorate the cafeteria, milk mustache stickers, and a poster that students can sign that says they accept the challenge to drink milk.

The campaign, titled Accept the Challenge, Drink Milk, reminds students that milk is an important part of breakfast.



The students at St. Mark's Lutheran School, in Steeleville IL, are ready for a challenge—especially if it involves drinking milk for breakfast and wearing a milk mustache. The school is 1 of 984 schools that committed to drinking milk for breakfast during National School Breakfast Week.

Grant Helps Students Drink Milk Round the Clock



SLDDC nutrition educator Joyce Fikri and Jersey Community High teacher Scott Burney debut the popular new milk vending machine.

After receiving SLDDC's Power Up grant for the boys' basketball team in 2012, Jersey Community (IL) High School decided to purchase a milk vending machine so that all 1,200 students could have access to milk during and after school. Due to popular demand, the school purchased a second milk vending machine in 2016, thanks to SLDDC's Dollars for Dairy grant.

Jersey Community High health teacher Scott Burney says that because milk is easily accessible during the day, the students are choosing dairy instead of other caffeinated beverages.

"Adding the milk vending machine has reduced the number of

20-ounce sodas being sold and has tremendously increased the amount of milk purchased and consumed," Burney says. Students and staff purchase more than 300 bottles of chocolate, latte, and strawberry milk from the vending machines each month.

"Students are making the healthier decision of quenching their thirst with a milk product rather than a caffeinated beverage," Burney says. "The vending machine has given our students an opportunity to enjoy milk any time of the day—not just during breakfast or lunch."

Dollars for Dairy grants provide schools with the funds to purchase equipment to increase dairy consumption.