



Let's Eat Healthy

Milk + Dairy



An Important Part of a Healthy Eating Pattern
 A healthy eating pattern starts with daily nutrient-rich food choices like milk, yogurt, cheese, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds and lean proteins.

Many Tasty Ways to Enjoy Milk, Cheese and Yogurt

A variety of milk and dairy food options can support personal needs, tastes and traditions.

Dairy Foods					
Snack Ideas					
Meal Ideas					



Did You Know?

It's a good idea to eat milk and dairy products every day. Milk and dairy products are good sources of calcium, protein, and other nutrients. They also help you stay healthy and strong. For more information, visit www.choosemyplate.gov.

Benefits for a Lifetime

Dairy foods like milk, yogurt and cheese have a special package of nutrients that benefits all ages.



Lean muscle development, brain development and immune support

Optimal growth and development for children and success in school

Lower risk of type 2 diabetes, obesity and heart disease and healthy blood pressure

How much dairy is recommended every day?

- 1-3 cups
- 2-3 1/2 cups
- 3 cups

Source: Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010-2015



What does a cup look like?

Fermented Dairy

Includes yogurt, kefir and cottage cheese

Tastes creamy and tangy

Provides probiotics and special health benefits

May improve gut health, bone health, mental health and immunity

May help reduce lactose intolerance

Banana Berry Smoothie Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 Banana
- 1/2 cup Milk
- 1/2 cup Vanilla Yogurt
- 1/2 cup Fresh or Frozen Berries
- 4 Ice Cubes

To make: In a blender, process all the ingredients until smooth. Add more milk if the smoothie is too thick.

Makes one serving. Enjoy immediately!

Dairy Declaration Case Studies

Have a look at our case studies from our IDF Dairy Sustainable Outlook Edition



Denmark: Arla Foods extends cooperation to dairy farming in China

[Read more](#)



India: A robust manure value chain – strengthening livelihood security of small holder dairy farming systems

[Read more](#)

View more case study examples by countries across the globe

- **France:** CLIMALAIT: Adapting to climate change for resilient French dairy farms
- **Japan:** Japanese Initiatives for sustainable dairy development
- **Nigeria:** Milky way to development – Arla's commitment to sustainable dairy development in Nigeria
- **South Africa:** Eco-efficiency of irrigated dairy pastures in South Africa: N2O Emissions from managed soils and its implication for carbon footprint calculations
- **USA:** Dairy Council of California: 'Let's eat healthy' movement
- **USA:** Land O'lakes examples for SDG goals
- **Zambia:** Introducing Milky Boost





A Message From the CEO

Food Access Isn't Enough



Food access is about ensuring food is available to those who need it, and leaders are beginning to understand that simply providing access to food isn't enough—

people need nutrition security.

Nutrition security, which is achieved when all people have physical, social and economic access to nutritious food to meet dietary needs and preferences for good health, is now replacing food security as the desired goal for Americans. Nutrition security factors the nutritional quality of foods; environmental conditions including where people, live, learn, work, play and gather, and the impact of diet quality on overall health outcomes.

Taking steps to achieve nutrition security, which also includes supporting access to nutrition education, can help improve the health of all children, families and communities. This is especially important, as many Americans have one or more chronic diseases. And dairy foods can help.

With research supporting the numerous benefits of dairy foods, the dairy community has an opportunity to elevate the role dairy foods can play in achieving nutrition security. Learn more at HealthyEating.org/WNBF.

To a healthy futures,

Tammy Anderson-Wise

School Meals Provide Path to Nutrition Security



Publicly funded nutrition programs like school meal programs provide critical access to nutrient-rich foods like milk and dairy, which are often underconsumed yet vital to supporting healthy children and families. Milk and dairy foods provide essential nutrients children need to grow and develop optimally, which is why dairy foods are an important part of the solution to achieving nutrition security.

The United States is joining the global coalition, "School Meals, Nutrition, Health and Education for Every Child," with aims to make nutritious meals available for all children by 2030. Leading the way is California, the first U.S. state to make school meals free for all public school children regardless of their family's income. For millions of students, school meals are a primary source of nutrition. With the long term impacts of the pandemic still unknown, expanding school meal programs to all students—and providing direct access to nutritious foods like milk and dairy foods—can help fill in nutrient gaps and support healthier students.

Dairy Foods Contribute to Healthy Eating Patterns

In conversations focused on achieving nutrition security, dairy foods are well-positioned because they are nutrient-rich, affordable, accessible and culturally relevant. In addition, dairy foods offer a unique package of nutrients that provide multiple benefits, including optimal growth and development in children and reduced risk of developing chronic diseases. Because of these numerous benefits, access to dairy foods is especially important in underserved communities and during early childhood.





Elevated News From Tammy Anderson-Wise, CEO



August 5, 2021

Dear Kendall,

Many children in California and throughout the United States lack access to nutritious foods and nutrition education, leaving them without the support they need to achieve optimal health. That is why Dairy Council of California, in collaboration with The Children's Partnership, Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, First 5 Sacramento, Los Angeles County Office of Education and No Kid Hungry, proudly announced the official launch of [Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures](#), an initiative of the Let's Eat Healthy® movement, earlier this week.

Leading up to the announcement, a two-day convening brought together key stakeholders in California representing community-based, academic, government and advocacy organizations to share learning, resources and capacity to collectively elevate the needs of children and find equitable solutions that enable access to healthy foods and nutrition education, which play an important role in supporting healthier children, families and communities.

The convening resulted in the development of a comprehensive [Convening Report](#), a robust framework that aims to inspire, support and propel action and advocacy for healthier, nourished children and families. The report outlines the initiative's nutrition principles and captures key findings and takeaways gleaned from the invaluable expertise shared during the convening. It aims to provide stakeholders and interested professionals with guidance and information to help improve nutrition education, facilitate and provide access to nutritious foods such as milk and dairy foods, and advocate for every child's nutritional needs in diverse settings. Stakeholders participating in the Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures initiative acknowledged the importance of prioritizing children's health,



Dairy Council of California, 1418 N. Market Blvd., Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95834, United States

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especially during the first 1,000 days of life, to _____
ensure they have the nutritious foods needed to grow healthfully and thrive.

With the [United Nations Food Systems Summit](#) quickly approaching and the pre-summit sessions already conducted, Dairy Council of California is proud to continue to support the dairy industry by monitoring conversations and the environment, providing insights and expertise to help elevate milk and dairy foods' critical role in sustainably supporting healthy people and a healthy planet, and doing our part to foster an environment that is receptive and supportive of encouraging consumption of dairy foods in daily eating patterns.

Recent successes include:

- [Two featured case studies](#) in the [Dairy Declaration of Rotterdam](#) highlighting the [Let's Eat Healthy® movement](#) and the [California Dairy Sustainability Summit](#), which included a [keynote session](#) by Dairy Council of California. The Dairy Declaration of Rotterdam is a formal commitment by the dairy sector to contribute to the achievement of the key sustainable development goals. Dairy Council of California and its California dairy partners are proud to be included as a global example of how the dairy industry is supporting healthier people and communities and a healthier planet.
- Partnering with California Milk Advisory Board on a [Milk Cooler Bag Initiative](#) that provided free milk cooler bags to California schools to enable them to keep milk cold and continue to serve milk to children, a growing concern with school meal service taking place outdoors.
- The release of a new video in the [Ask a Nutritionist](#) series, hosted by Ashley Rosales, RDN, who answers the question, "What role do milk and dairy foods play in sustainable food systems?"
- New blogs shared with educators, health professionals, community leaders and influencers that support the role of dairy foods in daily eating patterns through trending topics, including [sustainable nutrition](#), [nutrition equity](#), [nutrition security](#) and [nutrition education](#).

The pandemic is not yet over, and with the new delta variant surging throughout the country, we hope you, your family and the entire dairy community stay safe and healthy. One thing is certain: We are stronger together. Thank you for your ongoing support of the work we do to educate on the health benefits of milk and dairy foods, enabling us to inspire and foster healthier children, families and communities on your behalf. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Healthy Regards,



Tammy Anderson-Wise, CEO
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STUDENTS START THE SCHOOL YEAR STRONG THANKS TO THE SUMMER STARS PROGRAM IN SACRAMENTO AND YOLO COUNTIES

Partnership with Community Housing Opportunities Corporation (CHOC), Dairy Council of California and United Way Aims to Fight the 'Summer Slide'

FAIRFIELD, Calif. (SEPTEMBER 15, 2021)-- [Community Housing Opportunities Corporation \(CHOC\)](#), a non-profit, affordable housing developer, has partnered with Dairy Council of California and United Way California Capital Region (UWCCR) to keep CHOC's young residents fed and healthy, as well as focused and engaged with reading while on summer break. Through the Summer STARS program, children and families receive food access and education that focuses on nutrition literacy where families live, work and play, empowering healthier students and stronger communities. Participating school districts include Elk Grove Unified School District and Natomas Unified School District.

Community connection is critical to delivering effective, culturally relevant services. The summer months bring uncertainties for many families as they face food insecurity and a lack of affordable enrichment activities for kids. This is compounded by the potential learning loss over the summer, called the "summer slide." Over the summer, low-income students can fall behind by 2-3 months, while middle class students tend to advance by one month.

"Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic school year has brought on learning and achievement gaps for kids. Providing young CHOC residents with continuous learning opportunities like Summer STARS matters and makes a difference," said Terri Smyth, MSW, Director of Family and Youth Services at CHOC. "The impact of multiple organizations like Dairy Council of California, United Way and multiple school districts, leveraging resources will make a tremendous impact on the transition back to the school year and after school programs."

More than 40 students participated in STARS, powered by BookNook, at five CHOC Summer Enrichment Programs. The youth participated in 58 hours of summer tutoring, which resulted in a total of 272 literacy tutoring sessions. Over the course of the summer, STARS program participants successfully completed 46 language arts standards and a total of 10 reading levels were gained collectively. On average, students gained at least half a reading level or more, according to the United Way California Capital Region.

Leveraging Let's Eat Healthy free nutrition resources that include science-based curricula, worksheets and informational and literary reading passages, students are able to learn about nutrition and build essential life skills while engaging in reading and writing activities.

“Providing children with access to nutritious foods and enriching activities like nutrition education and summer reading enables them to fuel their bodies and minds while school is out of session,” said Tracy Mendez, registered dietitian nutritionist and program director of nutrition education at Dairy Council of California. “When students learn how to make healthy eating decisions and experience healthy meals that include the recommended servings of milk and dairy, fruit and vegetables, whole grains and proteins, it helps them gain lifelong knowledge and confidence in their ability to nourish their bodies for optimal growth and development.”

School meal service plays an important role in supporting healthier students whether school is in or out of session. During summer months when school is out of session, summer meal service fills in the gaps, providing students with access to the nourishing foods they need for optimal growth and development, including milk and dairy, fruit, vegetables, whole grains and protein.

“By fueling students’ bodies, their minds are also fueled to learn, with evidence showing improved levels of academic achievement and performance, behavior, cognitive skills and attitudes, and overall health,” adds Mendez.

###

ABOUT CHOC Housing

Founded in 1984, the Community Housing Opportunities Corporation (CHOC) is a non-profit, affordable housing developer based in Fairfield, California with offices in Palm Springs, that creates and manages communities for individuals, families, seniors and those with special needs. CHOC believes that economically integrated, affordable housing is key to self-sufficiency and is achievable with enriching, supportive programs that give pride to residents, stabilize families and improve local economies. www.chochousing.org

Dairy Council of California

For over a century, the Dairy Council of California has empowered stakeholders, including educators, health professionals and community leaders, to elevate the health of children and families through the pursuit of lifelong healthy eating habits. Funded by California’s dairy farm families and local milk processors and under the guidance of California Department of Food and Agriculture, Dairy Council of California’s free science-based nutrition education resources, Mobile Dairy Classroom assemblies, training programs and online resources educate millions of students and families in California and throughout the United States. Learn more at HealthyEating.org.

United Way California Capital Region

For nearly 100 years, the United Way California Capital Region has brought local people together to make community change happen. With a mission to build stronger, healthier and more compassionate communities, the local United Way starts at square one: helping every

family succeed so their community can too. Serving Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties, the local United Way is working to meet its 20-year commitment to significantly reduce poverty in the region by building capacity in undervalued communities, creating meaningful partnerships, seeking equity in education and making social justice investments in families. For more information or to make a donation, visit YourLocalUnitedWay.org.

Water Board Letters Coming

The water board is telling me that they are working on similar letters for dairies in the Central Valley in areas of shallow groundwater outside of Merced County. The timing is not clear, but the water board is working on it. The water board has stated that they have identified about 70-100 additional dairies to receive these letters depending on the source of groundwater elevation maps. Most of these would be north of Merced County, but there is also a number in counties south of Merced County. If you have any questions on this, please contact me at paul@wudairies.com or call the office.

More to Celebrate on World School Milk Day as CA Provides Universal School Lunches

September 29th, 2021 marks World School Milk Day, culminating Hunger Action Month in the US, and California lawmakers have given dairy producers and school advocates alike a little more to celebrate this year with the addition of a universal school meal program to the State's budget. In an agreement between Governor Newsom and the state legislature this summer, California became the first state to offer the program, ensuring all 6 million students in the state will receive breakfast and lunch on campus.

According to the California Dairy Council, in 2000 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations recognized milk's important contribution to improving the health of children by declaring World School Milk Day. This annual date, on the last Wednesday of September, is intended to celebrate and draw attention to the school foodservice programs that promote childhood nutrition by bringing dairy milk to school cafeterias.



With the addition of funding in the state budget for universal meals more California students than ever will have access to nutritiously dense dairy products, especially students living in food insecure homes where these highly perishable products may not be available regularly thanks to partnerships between legislators, dairy groups and student advocates. To learn more about how you can help in the effort to provide dairy products to food insecure families in California, visit: <https://milklife.com/give>



Don't Miss WUD's Latest Podcast Episode
 Episode 37 is a can't miss, with updates for producers to absorb while they put in tractor hours during harvest. Tiffany brings us a robust market update this week with a round up of how harvest is moving as we round out September. Darby sits down this week for a Q&A with Kevin Piercy, and attorney and COVID-19 regulation specialist with Raimondo and Associates. Kevin answers a myriad of questions employers have as they continue to navigate the murky and ever-changing world of COVID-19 regulations. Tune in to Seen & Herd, on our website: <https://westernuniteddairies.com/seen-herd-podcast/>

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A Message From the CEO

Expanding Views of Sustainability Hold Promise for Dairy



Fires in the West, extreme flooding in the East and erratic climate-related events worldwide are drawing attention to the impacts of climate change. Among the subjects under scrutiny is the global food system, with world leaders looking for ways to improve how we produce and consume food to sustainably support the health of both people and the planet.

Because of this, food system stakeholders, including the dairy community, are being asked to collaborate and innovate to meet sustainability targets. At the same time, health experts, advocates, policymakers and even consumers are broadening their view of sustainability to include nutrition, seeking realistic solutions to sustainably nourish a growing population.

Sustainable nutrition means ensuring wholesome, nutrient-dense foods are accessible, affordable and culturally relevant while preserving natural resources and supporting local communities. Milk and dairy foods are well-positioned as part of the solution, offering a unique package of nutrients to support health.



Original source: WHO/FAO

When coupled with the dairy community's efforts and innovations to achieve a net zero carbon footprint, its environmental stewardship and positive economic impacts to community livelihood, there is a strong story to tell. Learn more at HealthyEating.org/DairyCommunity.

To a healthy and sustainable future,

Tammy Anderson-Wise



Dairy Foods Support Good Health

Global leaders are looking for solutions to address rising rates of chronic disease and nutrient deficiency. While there is no simple answer, the dairy community is well-positioned to be part of the solution to supporting healthier people around the world.

Milk and dairy foods are high-quality foods that contain a unique package of nutrients that work together to provide multiple benefits, supporting optimal growth and development and reducing chronic disease risk at all life stages.

Dairy foods are especially important for children and women of child-bearing years, providing vital nutrients needed for growth and cognitive development.

Worldwide, many people under-consume the nutrients they need for optimal health. By encouraging regular consumption of milk and dairy foods as part of daily eating patterns, we can close nutrient gaps and support good health.

The Dairy Community as Environmental Stewards

Public awareness of the connection between food and its impact on the environment is greater than ever. The dairy community can build trust with people by highlighting the continual improvements and innovations being made to preserve and protect environmental resources while producing nutrient-rich milk and dairy foods.

- More than 1,200 industry participants from 64 countries are supporting the Dairy Declaration of Rotterdam, a commitment to contribute to key Sustainable Development Goals.
- In the United States, the dairy industry aims to become carbon neutral, optimize water usage and improve water quality by 2050.
- In California, dairy farm families are participating in innovative climate-smart programs such as the cap-and-trade program to drastically cut down on greenhouse gas emissions.

Cultivating Social and Emotional Skills Through Nutrition Education

AUTHORS: Bessie O'Connor, RDN, and Morgan Carey, Dairy Council of California



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the

process by which individuals learn to interact with others, set and achieve goals and regulate their emotions.¹ Nutrition education and SEL can integrate to effectively build skills that support the whole child through instruction and activities that can shape behaviors to support lifelong health and well-being.



"I think it's great that the Let's Eat Healthy program is inspiring young people like myself to eat & treat themselves well!"

High School Student From Let's Eat Healthy Teen Program Survey

SEL Starts With Nutrition

California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris emphasizes, "As we're thinking about how to help students be successful, we must recognize that what we put in our kids' lunches or provide in a school environment makes a difference in a child's ability to regulate stress responses."² School meals, which are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, increase consumption of key food groups such as fruits, vegetables, dairy and whole grains, closing nutrient gaps that exist for many children in the United States.³ Improving access to daily nutritious meals provides a foundation to support cognitive function and the way children feel throughout the day, playing a role in stabilizing mood, self-esteem and focus,⁴ ensuring children are receptive to all learning, including SEL.

U.S. Consumption in Relation to MyPlate Food Group Recommendations, 2016



1. <http://danielcoyle.com/what-is-sel/>
 2. <http://www.cdph.ca/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ImzVaccines/Pages/Immunization-Program-Review.aspx>
 3. <http://www.fda.gov/oc/ohrt/ohrt-report-2016.pdf>
 4. <http://www.letseathealthy.org/healthy-school-lunch-report-2016.pdf>



Nutrition Education Is SEL

Nutrition education, which teaches children to make connections with food, health, environment and community, is a practical and engaging way to develop SEL competencies, including self-awareness, social awareness, relationship, self-management and responsible decision-making skills.

- Nutrition education is a vehicle for cultural exploration, building self-awareness through identity and social awareness by learning and respecting a variety of food traditions.
- Farm to school programs and school gardens offer experiential learning that teaches children about where food comes from, increases social awareness and builds appreciation of the journey of food from farm to plate.
- Food tasting, shared meals and celebrations build and strengthen relationships among peers and with educators.
- Nutrition education teaches a food group framework that empowers children to make healthy food choices, motivating them to be decision-makers who self-manage their health and well-being.

Research shows that nutrition education can teach students to recognize how a healthy diet influences emotional well-being and how emotions may influence eating habits,⁵ helping students effectively manage health-related behaviors.

SEL in Action

Surveys show that students who use the Let's Eat Healthy for Teens curriculum gain motivation, knowledge and skills to improve dietary patterns, demonstrating self-awareness and self-management.



Data from CDC's School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014

Call to Action

U.S. students receive less than eight hours of nutrition education each school year.⁶ To achieve the 40 hours required for behavior change, alignment across programs like SEL and nutrition education is an efficient and cost-effective strategy to systematically combine these types of health education to improve the social-emotional climate in schools.⁶



"Nutrition education is applicable to all students and their everyday lives, providing a strong platform for project-based learning. Food is needed for survival. It brings people together, and is something all students and their families can relate to."

Juliana Brown, Teacher on Special Assignment in Madras Unified School District

For access to free nutrition education resources, visit HealthyEating.org.

California takes bold actions on school meals

BY TAMMY ANDERSON-WISE, CEO OF DAIRY COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA (HTTPS://HOARDS.COM/BY-...)



California is taking bold actions that mean more students will have access to milk and dairy foods. Governor Newsom's recent climate package expands the state's Farm to School program by providing \$60 million over the next two years, a move that comes on the heels of the Golden State being the first state in the country to offer free school meals to all schoolchildren.

These programs are critically important to supporting healthy students and communities, since one in six children in the United States is impacted by food insecurity. Many more lack essential nutrients needed for optimal growth due to underconsumption of fruit, vegetables, and dairy foods. For so many children, school meals are the only opportunity they have to consume healthy food, making school meals a critical safety net.

Farm to School programs, long supported by the dairy community, are also part of the solution as they provide equitable access to healthy foods, including milk and dairy, and nutrition education. Importantly, research shows that eating patterns established at an early age influence not only academic and lifelong success but also food and beverage choices made throughout life. In turn, nutrition access and education positively impact health outcomes such as risk for obesity, hypertension, and diabetes in adulthood.

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Dairy Council of California believes all children and their families deserve equitable access to healthy foods and nutrition education. We also believe that milk and dairy foods are essential to daily healthy eating patterns – and Farm to School programs are an important way to demonstrate these values in action.

In California, we are proud of the recent efforts to support nutrition equity, but there is work yet to do across the globe, the country, and in our backyard, and we can't do it alone. For that reason, we encourage dairy farmers to support their local Farm to School initiatives and collaborate with other advocates for healthier children and families as part of the "Let's Eat Healthy" movement. Learn more at [HealthyEating.org/Join](https://www.healthyeating.org/Join) (<https://www.healthyeating.org/our-cause/join-the-movement>).

To comment, email your remarks to intel@hoards.com (<mailto:intel@hoards.com>).

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October 25, 2021

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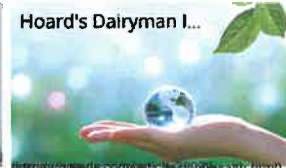
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VALLEY VOICES

Farm to School meals outreach helps Valley children learn nutrition, good eating habits

BY TYLER RIBEIRO AND TAMMY ANDERSON-WISE

NOVEMBER 06, 2021 5:00 AM



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ACCEPT COOKIES

From left, Pearla Lopez, 9, Japanese student Wakana Sugimoto, 10, and Arieaunna Loreda, 10, enjoy lunch together at Holland Elementary School in Fresno in this 2016 photo. SILVIA FLORES *FRESNO BEE FILE*



Only have a minute? Listen instead

-03:59

Powered by [Trinity Audio](#)

As California leads the nation by becoming the first state to offer [free school meals](#) to all children, Gov. Newsom's recent climate action package will expand the state's Farm to School program. And while these efforts are good news for ensuring that kids have access to meals, the Farm to School program is about so much more — it's about nutrition equity and ensuring all children are supported to grow healthfully.

And the timing could not be better. October was [Farm to School Month](#), bringing attention to how supporting such programs can help California achieve nutrition equity. That effort focuses on supporting equitable access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods to meet individual needs and preferences, and is vital to ensuring people are able to access nutritious foods.

Unfortunately, [disparities in access](#) to nutrient-rich, affordable food exist. Food insecurity impacts one in six American children, with many lacking essential nutrients due to underconsumption of fruit, vegetables and dairy food. The Farm to School program can be part of the solution by providing equitable access to healthy foods and nutrition education. Research shows that eating patterns established at an early age influence not only academic and lifelong success, but also food and beverage choices made throughout life, impacting [health](#) outcomes such as risk for obesity, hypertension and diabetes in adulthood.

TOP VIDEOS



Man dies in a single-vehicle collision in northwest Fresno

[the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#) examining the quality of schools meals. The study found that school meals scored higher on the Healthy Eating Index than meals prepared at home or from restaurants. The study determined that the foods many kids eat at school are likely providing more nutrition than the meals they eat outside of school.

California's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program will provide grants to schools to procure locally grown foods. This program is especially important in underserved communities where school meals provide a critical safety net for nourishing children.

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Today more than ever, children need evidence-based nutrition education to combat misinformation — and the Farm to School program includes nutrition education components. Nutrition education is critical because it equips and empowers people to make informed eating decisions and establishes healthy eating patterns for lifelong health, while increasing agricultural literacy and knowledge of how food gets from the farm to the plate.

While the Farm to School program, including its nutrition education components, is critical to supporting healthier children, families and communities, more action is needed. Achieving nutrition equity will require collaboration, advocacy and action to ensure children are supported to grow healthfully. With local, regional, state and national partners working together, along with strong federal food and nutrition assistance programs, nutrition equity can be achieved.

As a nutrition education organization with a legacy of supporting community health, the Dairy Council of California is proud to see Farm to School programs expand to include nutrition education and access to nutritious foods children and families need to be healthy. We invite advocates for healthier children, families and communities to join Let's Eat Healthy, a movement that supports, educates and empowers healthy eating habits. We believe that all people deserve access to healthy, wholesome and affordable foods, and that by working together, we can make that a reality. Join the movement today at HealthyEating.org/Join.

Tammy Anderson-Wise is CEO of Dairy Council of California. Tyler Ribeiro is a fourth generation dairy farmer and is partners with his father at Rib-Arrow Dairy in Tulare. They supply milk to Land O' Lakes.



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Tyler Ribeiro *CONTRIBUTED*

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ACCEPT COOKIES

Nutrition program helps San Joaquin Valley kids get good food

BY TYLER RIBEIRO AND TAMMY ANDERSON-WISE



As California leads the nation by becoming the first state to offer free school meals to all children, Gov. Newsom's recent climate action package will expand the state's Farm to School program. And while these efforts are good news for ensuring that kids have access to

meals, the Farm to School program is about so much more — it's about nutrition equity and ensuring all children are supported to grow healthfully.

And the timing could not be better. October was Farm to School Month, bringing attention to how supporting such programs can help California achieve nutrition equity. That effort focuses on supporting equitable access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods to meet individual needs and preferences, and is vital to ensuring people are able to access nutritious foods.

Unfortunately, disparities in access to nutrient-rich, affordable

food exist. Food insecurity impacts one in six American children, with many lacking essential nutrients due to underconsumption of fruit, vegetables and dairy food. The Farm to School program can be part of the solution by providing equitable access to healthy foods and nutrition education. Research shows that eating patterns established at an early age influence not only academic and lifelong success, but also food and beverage choices made throughout life, impacting health outcomes such as risk for obesity, hypertension and diabetes in adulthood.

This underscores the significance of free school meals for all children, since such meals feed millions of children each day and provide them with access to nutritious foods needed for health. This is supported by multiyear research by the Journal of

the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics examining the quality of schools meals. The study found that school meals scored higher on the Healthy Eating Index than meals prepared at home or from restaurants. The study determined that the foods many kids eat at school are likely providing more nutrition than the meals they eat outside of school.

California's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program will provide grants to schools to procure locally grown foods. This program is especially important in underserved communities where school meals provide a critical safety net for nourishing children.

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critical because it equips and empowers people to make informed eating decisions and establishes healthy eating patterns for lifelong health, while increasing agricultural literacy and knowledge of how food gets from the farm to the plate.

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