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**2010 DIETARY GUIDELINES ENCOURAGES AMERICANS TO
EAT MORE LOW-FAT AND FAT-FREE DAIRY FOODS**
**Latest nutrition guidance highlights dairy's key role in a nutrient-rich
diet**

CHICAGO, (February 2, 2011) /PRNewswire/ — The nation's obesity numbers continue to climb, yet surprisingly many Americans are falling short on key nutrients that could put their health at risk.^{1,2,3} To address the obesity epidemic the nation faces – especially among children – the federal government released the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, research-based nutrition guidance that aims to “prevent and/or reduce overweight and obesity through improved eating and physical activity behaviors.”³

Overall, the new Guidelines emphasizes a total diet approach, urging Americans to reduce calories and watch portion sizes; make more nutrient-rich choices, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products; and move more. In its role at the forefront of nutrition research and education, National Dairy Council (NDC) has long embraced the notion that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to nutrition and there are numerous ways to meet important nutrient needs, a concept reflected in the 2010 Guidelines.

Closing Nutrient Gaps with Just One More Serving

The new Guidelines maintains the 2005 recommendation that Americans ages nine years and older consume three servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy every day.^{4,5} Additionally, for children ages 4-8, the daily recommendation was increased from 2 to 2.5 servings and for children 2-3 years old, remained at 2 servings.⁵ Still, 85 percent of Americans are falling short of the current dairy recommendations.⁶

Because dairy foods are a unique source of several essential nutrients, Americans are missing out on critical nutrients by not consuming enough low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese or yogurt. According to the DGA, current evidence shows intake of milk and milk products is linked to improved bone health, especially in children and adolescents. In addition, intake of

milk and milk products is associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and lower blood pressure in adults.⁵

On average, the population is currently consuming close to 2 dairy servings a day,⁷ so the good news is, many Americans can meet their dairy needs with just 1 additional serving each day. If Americans nine years and older added another daily serving of low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese or yogurt, it would raise the average number of dairy foods consumed each day closer to the recommended goal of 3. Meeting recommendations can help address important nutrient gaps. For example, a single glass of milk delivers a package of nine essential nutrients important for good health, including calcium, potassium, phosphorus, protein, vitamins D, A and B12, riboflavin and niacin (niacin equivalents). Together, milk, cheese and yogurt contribute over half of the calcium and nearly 60 percent of the vitamin D in the American diet.⁷ Fortunately, dairy foods are widely available and are also some of the most affordable sources of nutrition available at the supermarket.

“I see families come into my office struggling with health and looking to improve the quality of their diet and one of the easiest, most practical pieces of advice I can give them is to find a way to get another glass of milk each day,” said Keith Ayoob, Ed.D., Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. “It’s familiar, it’s affordable, it’s available – as far as nutrition battles go – this is one that parents and their children can win.”

Child Nutrition – A Priority for the Nation

Faced with a generation of young people that are overweight^{3, 8} and undernourished,^{1,2,9} the Guidelines underscores the concern about the health of our children. Through NDC, dairy farmers have supported child nutrition research, education and communication in their communities and schools for more than 95 years – providing NDC with unparalleled insight into the health challenges faced by schools, parents and children. Now, this commitment extends to the in-school nutrition and physical activity program, Fuel Up to Play 60, a partnership between NDC and the National Football League, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Fuel Up to Play 60 encourages the availability and consumption of nutrient-rich foods by following the recommendations set forth by the 2010 Guidelines.¹⁰ The program specifically focuses on meeting recommendations for low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products, fruits, vegetables and whole grains – along with at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.

“It’s important to start teaching healthy habits at an early age, and the best opportunity we have with kids is at school,” said Jean Ragalie, R.D., President of National Dairy Council. “With the Fuel Up to Play 60 program, there are more than 70,000 schools across the country taking steps toward healthier lifestyles – the Guidelines gives them the foundation to make the most out of the program in their schools, cities and towns.”

Ragalie has tips for parents who are looking to take what students are learning about nutrition at school and applying it at home:

- **Find ways to make nutrient-rich foods portable** – whether it’s low-fat string cheese or some fruit or vegetables to dip in reduced-fat yogurt, having a nutritious snack on hand

when you're busy and away from home is a great way to avoid the empty-calorie foods that may be found in vending machines or convenience store shelves.

- **Start young to build healthy habits that last a lifetime** – The Dietary Guidelines note that it is “especially important to establish the habit of drinking milk in young children, as those who consume milk at an early age are more likely to do so as adults.”⁵ This goes for all healthy habits; if you talk about the importance of portion sizes and finding ways to stay active throughout the day, kids can follow your lead.
- **Start small, but think big** – The new Guidelines calls for some major changes – such as meeting recommendations for all five food groups, cutting salt intake, and decreasing calories from solid fats and added sugars. There are easy first steps to take – like switching out soda for milk – that can go a long way towards making sure families are getting the most out of their calories.
- **Wake up to the benefits of breakfast** – The new Guidelines specifically highlights eating a nutritious breakfast to help people meet nutritional recommendations.¹¹ Research shows regular breakfast consumption is associated with higher intake of several vitamins and minerals, such as calcium, vitamin A and vitamin C.¹² Breakfast has also been shown to play a role in improving academic performance for students.¹³

Dairy: A Nutritional Powerhouse

For Americans looking to follow the Guidelines' advice to increase the nutrient-rich foods they eat while keeping an eye on calories, dairy's nutrient-rich package really delivers. Milk and milk products provide just 10 percent of the calories in the American diet, but deliver:⁷

58 percent of the vitamin D

51 percent of the calcium

28 percent of the vitamin A and phosphorus

26 percent of the vitamin B12

Furthermore, at just about a quarter per glass, dairy foods are one of the most affordable sources of nutrients at the grocery store, and are an important tool for parents to use to start healthy habits early, especially since beverage habits formed in childhood can last into the teen years.¹⁴ For more information, the latest on nutrition research and access to experts, as well as tips on how to incorporate more dairy in the diet, visit www.nationaldairycouncil.org.

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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 comprises a staff of nutrition science researchers, registered dietitians and communications experts dedicated to educating the public on the health benefits of consuming milk and milk products throughout a person's lifespan. In addition, NDC funds independent research to aid in the ongoing discovery of information about dairy foods' important role in a healthy lifestyle. This research provides insights to industry for new dairy product innovation.

For more information, visit www.nationaldairycouncil.org.

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