IDFA
International
Dairy Foods Association

June 5, 2023

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chair
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert C. Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairwoman Foxx:

Ranking Member Scott:

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) writes in support of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce mark-up and Committee approval of H.R. 1147, Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023, co-sponsored by Representatives G.T. Thompson, Kim Schrier, and several bipartisan members of this Committee. The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act provides children, parents, and schools a wide variety of milk options—whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, non-fat and lactose-free—to meet their nutritional needs.

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), Washington, D.C., represents the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industry, which supports more than 3.3 million jobs that generate $41.6 billion in direct wages and $753 billion in overall economic impact. IDFA's diverse members make 90 percent of the milk, cheese, ice cream, yogurt and cultured products, and dairy ingredients produced and marketed in the United States and sold throughout the world. Safe, nutritious, affordable, and sustainable, dairy foods offer unparalleled health and consumer benefits to people of all ages.

Multiple cycles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) have repeatedly recommended the need for increased intake of dairy products due to its density in providing 13 essential nutrients, its health benefits including better bone health and lower risk for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, but also identifying dairy as an under-consumed food group.[1] This is especially true of school age children, with between 68% and 76.2% of school age males and between 77.4% and 94.3% of school age females failing to meet recommended levels of dairy intake.[2]

Whole (3.25% milkfat) and reduced-fat (2%) milk varieties contain the same nutrients as low-fat (1%) or non-fat (skim) milk, including calcium, phosphorus, protein, vitamins A, D and B12, pantothenic acid, riboflavin, and niacin. Several recent research studies (including systematic reviews and meta-analyses) examining the effect of higher fat milk consumption found that it was associated with lower childhood obesity and concluded that dietary guidelines that recommend

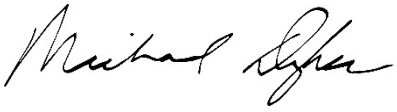
[1] U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at DietaryGuidelines.gov.
[2] Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. 2020. *Scientific Report of the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee: Advisory Report to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Online Materials, Table 1.15.* U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Washington, DC. Available at: https://doi.org/10.52570/DGAC2020.

reduced-fat milk versions might not provide a benefit in lowering the risk of childhood obesity.[3,4,5,6] One of these systematic reviews[7] also examined cardiometabolic health in children (2 to 18 years) in addition to adiposity and concluded that full fat dairy consumption was not associated with increased body weight and adiposity, or with cardiometabolic risk in children. Higher consumption of full fat dairy has been shown to be associated with lower risk of total body fat mass in children.[8] A systematic review showed that high-fat dairy products were inversely associated with risk of obesity.[9]

The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act encourages milk consumption within the school meal programs by providing schools, parents, and students the ability to choose and consume the milk they prefer, whether that be fuller fat milks like whole and 2%, low-fat or non-fat milks, or lactose free milks—all of which contain the same essential nutrients to meet their needs.

IDFA appreciates the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce consideration of H.R. 1147, Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023, and respectively seek your and Committee members' support for this critical legislation.

Sincerely,



Michael Dykes, D.V.M.
President and CEO
International Dairy Foods Association

[3] Vanderhout SM, Aglipay M, Torabi N, Jüni P, da Costa BR, Birken CS, O'Connor DL, Thorpe KE, and Maguire JL. Whole milk compared with reduced-fat milk and childhood overweight: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2019;00:1–14.
[4] O'Sullivan TA, Schmidt KA, and Kratz M. Whole-Fat or Reduced-Fat Dairy Product Intake, Adiposity, and Cardiometabolic Health in Children: A Systematic Review. *Adv Nutr 2020;00:1–23.*
[5] Dougkas A, Barr S, Reddy S and Summerbell CD. A critical review of the role of milk and other dairy products in the development of obesity in children and adolescents. *Nutrition Research Reviews (2019), 32, 106–127.*
[6] Kang K, Sotunde OF, and Weiler HA. Effects of Milk and Milk-Product Consumption on Growth among Children and Adolescents Aged 6-18 Years: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Adv Nutr 2019;10:250-261*
[7] O'Sullivan TA, Schmidt KA, and Kratz M. Whole-Fat or Reduced-Fat Dairy Product Intake, Adiposity, and Cardiometabolic Health in Children: A Systematic Review. *Adv Nutr 2020;00:1–23.*
[8] Bigornia SJ, LaValley MP, Moore LL, Northstone K, Emmett P, Ness AR, Newby PK. Dairy intakes at age 10 years do not adversely affect risk of excess adiposity at 13 years. J Nutr. 2014 Jul;144(7):1081-90. doi: 10.3945/jn.113.183640. Epub 2014 Apr 17. PMID: 24744312; PMCID: PMC4056647.
[9] Kratz M, Baars T, Guyenet S. The relationship between high-fat dairy consumption and obesity, cardiovascular, and metabolic disease. Eur J Nutr 2013;52:1-24.