

IDFA Oral Comments on the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Report
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Good Morning. I am Michelle Matto, a registered dietitian speaking on behalf of the International Dairy Foods Association. IDFA, based in Washington, DC, represents the nation's dairy manufacturers and their suppliers. IDFA is composed of three constituent organizations: the Milk Industry Foundation, the National Cheese Institute and the International Ice Cream Association. IDFA's members range from large multi-national organizations to single-plant companies. Together IDFA represents more than 85 percent of the milk, cultured products, cheese and ice cream produced and marketed in the United States.

We applaud the committee's continued recommendation that Americans over the age of 8 consume three servings of low fat and fat free dairy products per day, while children 8 and younger consume two servings. Dairy products are the major contributors of three of the four nutrients of concern with public health implications identified in this Advisory Committee report, calcium, potassium and vitamin D. Additionally, a number of nutrients would be consumed at significantly lower levels if dairy products were eliminated from the diet, specifically calcium, potassium, magnesium, protein, vitamin D, and vitamin A – even a reduction in dairy would make a difference in the wrong way for all of these nutrients.

We were especially pleased to see the report identify milk and milk products as a category of foods whose intake should be increased. The data clearly show that the current intake of dairy by nearly all Americans is too low: 90 percent to 95 percent of women and girls, 50 percent of boys and 75 percent to 90 percent of men consume less than the recommended amount of milk and milk products. Milk consumption has decreased by 33 percent since 1970, while the amount of carbonated soft drinks that are available has increased by 20 percent from 1984 to 2008.

As the agencies now work toward translating the technical report into a public document, we ask that you take into account the availability and variety of choices that can help consumers meet the increased recommendations of low fat and non-fat dairy products. Tremendous advancement has been made in the dairy industry to offer lower fat and lower calorie options. Cheese, an important source of calcium and protein, has proven more challenging to meet consumer expectations while lowering the fat content. In 2009, only 1.2 percent of natural cheese and 2.4 percent of processed cheese sold in supermarkets was lowfat or fat free. While cheesemakers are working toward lower fat versions, lowfat and fat free cheeses are not yet widely available.

Milk and dairy products with moderate amounts of added sugar should be considered as options to help increase the palatability and intake of dairy foods. In fact, studies show that children who drink flavored milk drink more milk overall, meet more of their nutrient needs, do not consume more added sugars or fat and are not heavier than non-

milk drinkers. On average, the added sugars in flavored milk account for less than 2 percent of the total added sugars in American teens' diets, while sodas and fruit drinks provide more than 50 percent. However, milk processors are striving to further lower calories in flavored milk by reducing fat and sugar. For the '08/'09 school year, the average calorie level of flavored milk had been reduced 6 percent or 10 calories per 8 ounce serving compared to the previous year.

In conclusion, we ask that you consider providing consumers options to meet the Dietary Guidelines with foods that can be readily obtained and enjoyed. As the marketplace continues to change, consumers will be presented with even more healthy choices; in the meantime we know that if consumers don't choose healthy foods because they aren't available or don't taste good, they won't move toward the healthier lives we are trying to achieve through the Dietary Guidelines.

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