



International Dairy Foods Association

Milk Industry Foundation

National Cheese Institute

International Ice Cream Association

Statement to the Senate Committee on Appropriations

**Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies**

and

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government

by

**Miriam Erickson Brown
Milk Industry Foundation, Chair**

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September 23, 2008

Subcommittee Chairman Harkin, Subcommittee Chairman Durbin, and all members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government:

I am Miriam Erickson Brown, President and CEO of Anderson Erickson Dairy in Des Moines Iowa. I am also Chairwoman of the Board of the Milk Industry Foundation, representing more than 100 fluid milk manufacturers across the country. The Milk Industry Foundation is part of the International Dairy Food Association which represents over 85% of the nation's milk, cheese, and ice cream makers, with over 1100 processing plants and 120,000 employees nationwide.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the very important topic of marketing food to children. There is no doubt that marketing directed at children influences the health and well being of our nation's youth. Milk consumption among youth, and the U.S. population as a whole has been in decline for over three decades. The proliferation of competing beverages in all market channels and the mass marketing of these beverages have strongly influenced what children are drinking today.

As reported to Congress by USDA in July 2007, milk is one of the lowest categories in media spending per gallon as compared to other beverages in the marketplace. Carbonated soft drinks, which has the largest market share of all beverages, accounts for nearly half of all advertising dollars. The most heavily marketed of all beverages on a volume basis, are sports drinks. While milk's market share has been declining and flat, other beverages like sports drinks and flavored waters have increased per capita consumption.

This very competitive marketing environment plays out in schools, where our children are offered the same highly marketed beverages in vending machines, cafeterias, and sporting events. The latest survey by the School Nutrition Association¹, reported that milk is offered in a declining percentage of vending machines, only 34%, compared to sports drinks which were reported in 70%. In this report, we know that school vending machines are a prominent fixture in most schools, with 87% reporting student accessible vending machines.

Many of these highly marketed beverages available in schools are higher in calories but lack the nutrients found in milk. Milk is nutrient rich with 9 essential nutrients in one package. In fact, milk is the number one source of calcium, potassium, and vitamin A. If children are not drinking milk, they are not receiving important vitamins and minerals essential to their growth and development².

Kids often choose less nutritious beverages because they have marketing appeal, and they are easily accessible. This reality is inconsistent with the dietary guidelines, developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which recommend that children 2 to 8 years should consume 2 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products. Children 9 years of age and older should consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products.

1 2008 Back to School Trends Report, School Nutrition Association.

2 These recommendations taken from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005* website-
<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/chapter5.htm>

While milk holds its own on the lunch line because it is required to be offered, milk often does not reach the kids who do not participate in school meals. In fact, it is estimated that only half of school aged children are consuming milk in schools (see accompanying chart).

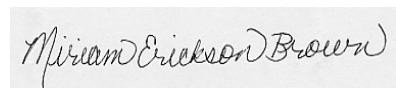
The General Accounting Office (GAO) recently reported that almost all schools sell competitive foods and beverages because they raise substantial revenue to support school food service operations and student activities³. Thus, not only is there a marketing advantage to most non-milk beverage choices, but also a financial incentive for schools to promote these drinks. The revenue generated by a la carte sales and vending machine sales is a significant obstacle to promoting milk consumption in schools. Historically, milk was the only beverage offered in schools, and school districts were given a reimbursement by the government to offset the cost under USDA's Special Milk program. Unfortunately, the reimbursement for a la carte milk sales was taken away from most schools in 1981, and today is only available to private schools under USDA's Special Milk Program.

I'm bringing the issue of marketing and milk consumption in schools to your attention today for a very important reason. Government health statistics indicate that almost 90% of girls do not meet their recommended intakes of calcium, while about 70% of boys fall short of the calcium recommendation⁴. Milk and most dairy products provide nine essential nutrients, including three of the five nutrients identified as "nutrients of concern" for children in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans - calcium, magnesium and potassium⁵.

In my opinion, the fierce marketing of competing beverages to milk will remain a challenge for both the dairy industry and the public health community. During reauthorization of the Child Nutrition programs next year, Congress will have the opportunity to put our children's health first, by limiting the marketing and availability of beverages of minimal nutritional value in our nation's public schools.

Thank you for holding this hearing today. We look forward to working with you on ways to improve the marketing of healthy products like milk to children. .

Sincerely,



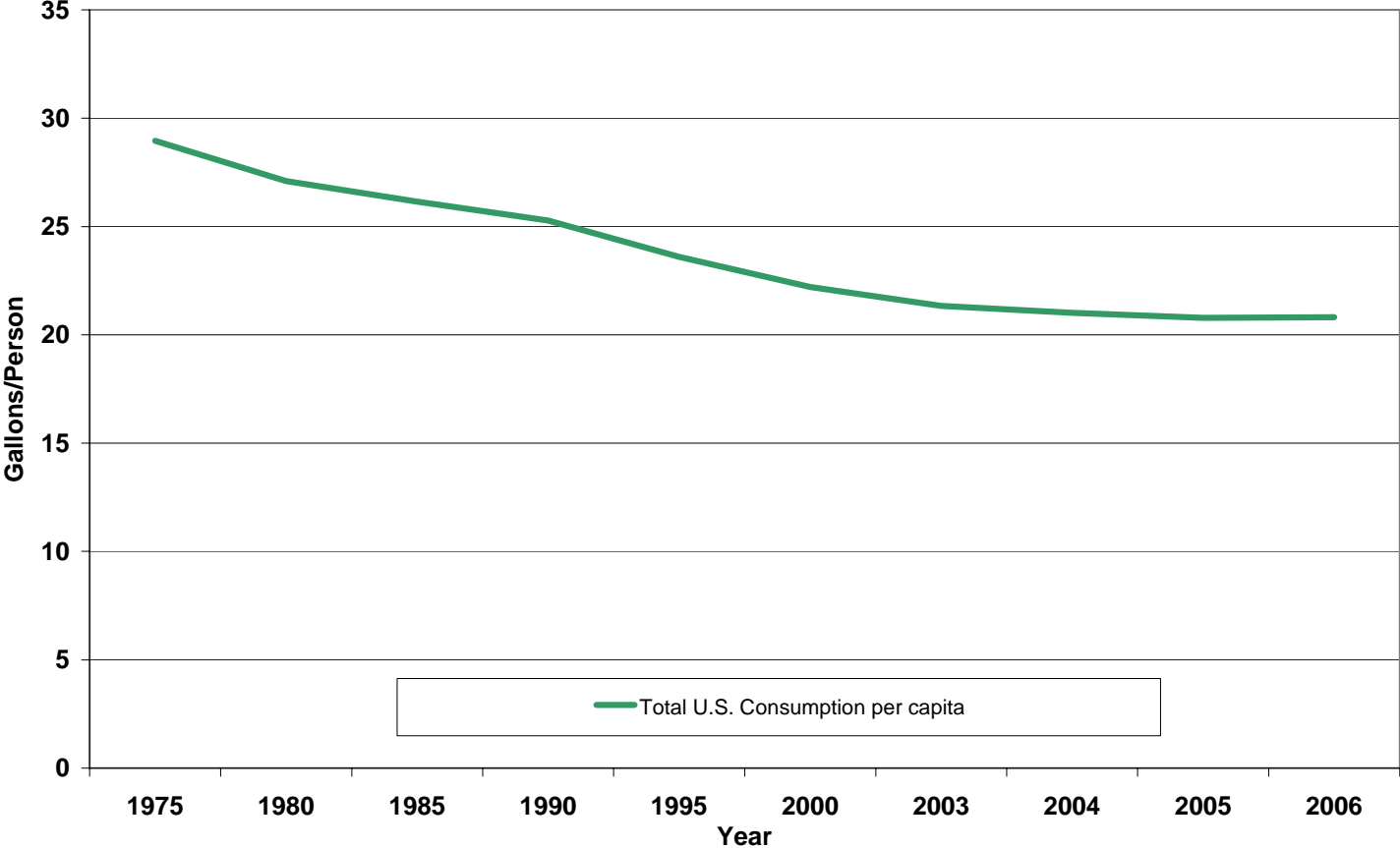
Miriam Erickson Brown
Milk Industry Foundation, Chair
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3 General Accountability Office (GAO) Report 05-563 School Meal Programs: Competitive Foods are Widely Available and Generate Substantial Revenues for Schools

4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Data. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999-2002.

5 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005 (6th ed.).

Milk Consumption Patterns

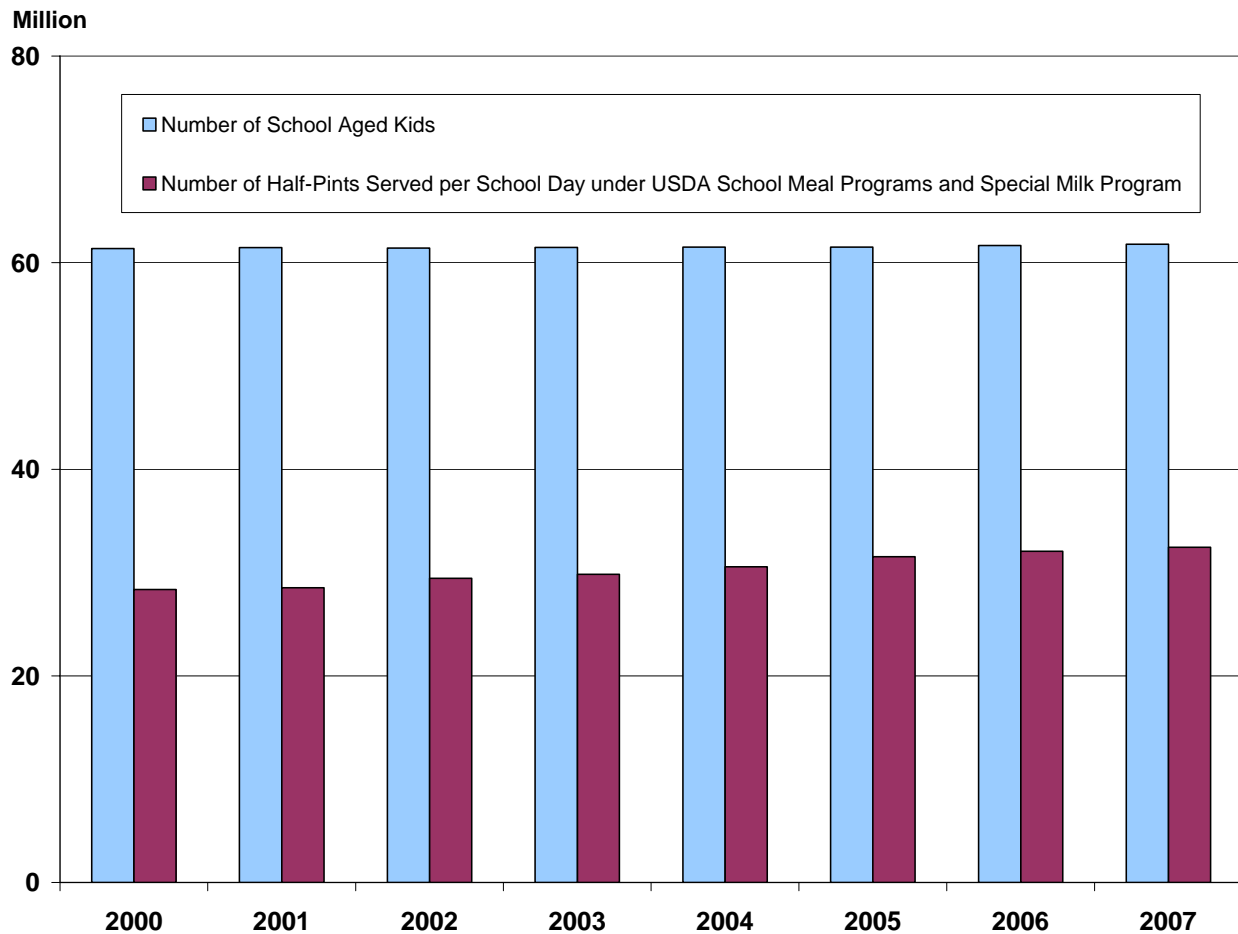


Source: USDA



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Only half of school aged kids are drinking a cup of milk per school day:
Children 2-8 years should consume 2 cups per day of fat free or low fat milk
or milk products. Children 9 years of age or older should consume 3 cups.



Source: Food Nutrition Service; U.S. Census Bureau; 2005 USDA Dietary Guidelines and IDFA Calculations