

World School Milk Day

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On the last Wednesday in September of each year, over 30 countries — regardless of whether they are large or small, rich or poor — celebrate **World School Milk Day**.

The interest in school milk is universal. The first World School Milk Day (WSMD) was held in 2000 and it has since become an annual event, with a growing number of countries joining in on the celebration. The day is supported by the **Food and Agricultural Organisation** of the **United Nations** which operates a free email discussion group on school milk issues. Several countries reported on their WSMD activities and **dairy innovation** includes some of those in this article.

Celebrating the value of school milk and spreading the word



Australia repeated its successful school creative drawing, writing and photography competition. All primary schools throughout Australia received a promotional postcard detailing the promotion as well as follow up reminder faxes. Around 1,700 entries were received from right across the country. The work of the finalists (two are pictured left) went on display throughout the Royal Melbourne Show with youngsters assessing the entries.

The announcement of the winner was broadcast on the Show radio. The winners are now displayed at www.dairy.edu.au/discoverdairy.

As in previous years, **Canada** celebrated World School Milk Day with a National Poster contest. Elementary school students who participated in their province's school milk programme celebrated the day by creating original posters that show their appreciation for milk. Schools will then submit their top entries and all the posters will be judged in early 2008 at the National School Milk Meeting. The winning poster will be used to publicise World School Milk Day 2008.

In the **United States**, in Augusta, Georgia, school cafeterias were decorated with posters and inflatable cows and characters that represent strong bones. Prizes were on offer at each school for different age groups. As part of a year long campaign to increase nutrition education for elementary children, a plush character named Calci M Bone has been featured. Calci is a part of the OrganWise Guys programme (see left) running in elementary schools in Georgia. Other characters include Hearty Heart, Windy the Lungs, Peri Stolic (the colon), Sir Rebrum (the brain), Pepto (the stomach) and Luigi Liver.

Several dairy companies in **Sweden** ran competitions on their web sites. Some companies also produced leaflets and other publicity material that was distributed to schools. **The Swedish Dairy Association** promoted World School Milk Day on its web site and in its magazine. It also sent out press releases pointing out that it is important for pupils to have the possibility to choose between semi-skimmed and skimmed milk in school and giving

information about the new recommendation about School and Pre-school Meals from the **Swedish Nutrition Board** where skimmed milk is recommended.

In **Indonesia** articles on School Milk were sent to newspapers and magazines to publicise the benefits of school milk programmes.

Celebrations in **India** focused on the city of Vadodara, in Gujarat where a special event was organised by the **School Health Annual Report Programme (SHARP)** and took place at Baroda High School in Vadodara. Chief guest was His Holy Highness Lalji Maharaj Shree Nrigendraprasadji Maharaj, Shree Swaminarayan Sect. SHARP organised an Inter School painting competition with the theme Milky Way to a stronger nation. Eighty schools took part and the best three entries were given prizes by His Holy Highness. The students were told of the benefits of milk through a small play staged by artists of All India Shree LaxminarayanDev Yuvak Mandal and of Shree Swaminarayan Sect Vadtal. Around 300 students from various schools attended the event and were served milk, packaged in **Tetra Pak** cartons, after the event.

World School Milk Day also marked the launching of State wide School Milk Clubs in various schools of Gujarat. These clubs have been formed following a pilot study by dairy company **Amul** and SHARP.

Intideepam (Light of Home) Women's Dairy in Nizamabad district of Andhra Pradesh state, India, celebrated WSMD at Suddapalli village primary school. The children were told about the nutritive benefits of milk consumption at sessions attended by local government leaders. All the school children were given milk at the end of the function. The dairy also sent out a press statement on the importance of the school milk day and an appeal to Government to introduce school milk schemes.

In Zagreb, **Croatia**, children gathered in the main square where they presented their work celebrating milk with pictures and songs and were given milk and dairy products brought by representatives from many Croatian dairies.

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Jamaica celebrated the Day with a newspaper supplement sponsored by milk processors. Some of these processors also hosted activities in schools.

School Milk Project facilitators in the **United Kingdom** worked hard to ensure that assemblies and class talks were booked for the day. In Wales, over 1,000 School Milk Project packs, 6,000 stickers, more than 300 Healthy Choices packs and over 600 posters were sent out. Nearly 1,700 bilingual (English/Welsh) educational resources were also sent out to promote WSMD.

Scottish facilitator Claire Doyle visited four different schools. Charlotte the cow, the project's mascot, joined in the salsa dancing with children from Dykehead Primary School (top right). **Dairy Farmers of Britain** provided Hampshire facilitator Sharon Long with free milk to take to Waite End Primary in Waterlooville. The children also received booklets and stickers as well as posters and milk shake recipes. St Mary's CE Primary in Bentworth celebrated with a special assembly – a copy of the Project's Story of Milk booklet was given to every child. Jill Middleton in the Midlands also led a special assembly. The school she visited is hoping to introduce a pupil led healthy tuck shop with milk on sale every day.

Since World School Milk Day, an additional 46 schools have come forward asking for materials and support to help promote the drinking of milk.

In **Israel** dairy company **Yotvata Dairies**, located in the Arava desert in the south of Israel by the Red Sea, organised a Choco-Milk festival – Yotvata's most popular product. The festival took place in Timna Park, near the old King Solomon Copper Mines (centre right). Eighteen hot air balloons, from different parts of the world, took off into the desert sky early in the morning (bottom right).

Meanwhile, Yotvata Choco-Milk – served hot or cold – was on offer to the many people from across the country that had turned up to see the spectacle.

Poland celebrated the 8th World School Milk Day in Plock, in the Mazovian Region, under the title Milky Way to School. A conference was held at the Higher School of Paweł Włodkowic, to which the **Mazovian Centre for Public Health and Agricultural Agency** invited more than 300 people, including directors and teachers from schools, representatives of local government bodies and the dairy industry, along with the media. The main purpose of the conference was to focus attention on the importance of milk for young people as well as the possibilities of using financial support from the EU to introduce school milk schemes. During the coffee break delegates were able to sample various liquid milk products provided by dairy companies, supported by global packaging company **Elopak**.

Finally, World School Milk day was celebrated in **Tanzania** at a school – running a school milk programme – which is located on the southern slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro. The event was attended by pupils from more than ten primary schools that have a school milk programme at their school. Among the guests were the Regional Commissioner of Kilimanjaro region, the Chairman of the **Tanzania Dairy Board**, a representative of the Ministry of Livestock Development and other dignitaries. Parents of the children were also present. It was a colourful rally with the children singing and reciting poems. The chief guest – the Regional Commissioner – gave a moving speech advocating a nationwide school milk programme.

Enter the 'Best school milk initiative' category in the **2008 dairy innovation awards**. Turn to page 47 or visit www.dairy-innovation.com



Tetra Pak public private partnership supports Iranian school milk programme

Over twelve million children now receive school milk each year, through the Iranian school milk programme. This represents an estimated growth of 400% since the programme began in 2001 with only 1.2 million students. Through the national scheme, students receive three portions of 20cl white milk every week for a total of 70 portions over a six month period. Six million of these receive milk in Tetra Pak packages.

In Iran it is typical for milk consumption to fall once a child finishes nursing. As a result, the national average falls well below the world standard of 250-300kgs. Research shows that a diet low in dairy products can have numerous side effects and low levels of dairy consumption have had a direct impact on Iran's health. 50% of Iranian children in deprived areas are suffering from inadequate physical growth and 40% of women suffer from osteoporosis, a condition they reach 15 years earlier than the world average.

The Iranian school milk programme was introduced in the 2001-02 academic year as a preventative health measure to address the issues caused by poor nutrition and low dairy consumption. Since 2001, **Tetra Pak** has supported the significant growth and success of this initiative by helping to increase the capacity of the UHT milk producers.

School milk programmes often act as a catalyst for increasing demand for locally produced milk, thereby stimulating investment in the dairy sector. Iran is no exception. The national school milk programme has played a role in developing the white milk segment in Iran – a 7% increase corresponding to 187.5 million litres – over the last six years.

The long term aim of the project is to achieve a sustainable dairy industry by promoting, developing and improving the local milk sector from cow to consumer. By combining the training and education of dairy farmers, equipment financing based on commercial terms and school milk programmes, a base for sustainable economic development has been established.

For more information, visit:
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