Call for good practices and lessons learned on food security and nutrition policy implementation in Europe and Central Asia region

Template for submissions

FAO’s Project “Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia” (funded by the Russian Federation), in collaboration with the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition and the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, is pleased to invite you to share good practices and lessons learned on food security and nutrition policy implementation in the region.

Please use this submission form to share your examples and experiences. For the necessary background and guidance, please refer to the website: www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/activities/open-calls/FSN_policy_implementati

You can upload the completed form to the FSN Forum www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/activities/open-calls/FSN_policy_implementation or send it via email to fsn-moderator@fao.org.

Author of submission (name, surname, position, organization)

Seyit SONUVAR, Veterinarian, the Directorate General of Livestock

Title of your example

School Milk Program
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Theme
☐ Sustainable food systems for improved nutrition
☒ School food and nutrition programs linked to the agricultural sector
☐ Nutrition sensitive social protection programs;
☐ Governance and accountability for nutrition.

Date, location and geographic scope of your example (regional, sub-regional, national, local)
The program, which has been implemented since 2012, covers the distribution of 200 ml of packed, whole, plain UHT drinking milk to the 6 million students of 32 thousand schools (pre-school and primary school students) 3 days a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) in the second semester of the national school year.

Main responsible entity(ies) for the implementation of your example

Responsible persons: Seyit SONUVAR, Veterinarian; Çağdaş Gökhan KOSER, Agricultural Engineer
Responsible Organizations: The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MoFAL), The Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey and the National Milk Board

Key objectives and implementation approach of your example (approximately 600 words)
The Program aims to ensure that approximately 6 million students between the ages of 4 and 10 acquire milk drinking habits, and to ensure healthy growth and development of children through contributing to their adequate and balanced nutrition. Milk is distributed in the form of 200 ml of UHT, plain, whole, packaged drinking milk.

The controls in the production and distribution stages of school milk, which is provided through a tender made by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock in accordance with the Public Procurement Law, are conducted by The Provincial Directorates of Food, Agriculture and Livestock.

The milk delivered to schools is registered in the School Milk Module (http://okulsutu.meb.gov.tr) which is created by the Ministry of National Education and is available to all schools. In this system, the milk delivered to the schools can be traced in terms of distribution and the stock status.

The school milk Program is implemented by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock with the approval of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Education, in order to ensure the registry and traceability concerning the provision and transport of school milk, and their deliveries to the school administrations, their storage and distribution to the students, in order to make assessment of the Program, and to ensure that the provincial units of the respective ministries work in
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Funding and technical assistance of your example (approximately 200 words)

The finance is provided from the fund allocated to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock in the scope of the general budget.

Key stakeholders involved. Describe the cross-sectoral coordination mechanism of your example, if any (approximately 300 words)

The Program is conducted with the participation of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock- Directorate General of Livestock, the Ministry of National Education- the Directorate General of Primary Education and the Ministry of Health- Public Health Institution and National Dairy Council.

Coordination between all the partners of the program is ensured by the General Directorate of Livestock continually. All the coordination activities ranging from the supply of School Milk to the payment at the latest stage are carried out by the Directorate General of Livestock.

The publicity of the Program, the determination of the communication strategy and the trainings of the individuals and organizations involved in the program are carried out by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health with the contribution of the National Milk Council.

In the provinces, the publicity and training activities for the Program is under the responsibility of the provincial school milk commission.

The design, publication and dissemination of educational and promotional materials for the Program are carried out by the National Milk Council under the coordination of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock.

The trainings for the publicity and use of the School Milk Module are under the responsibility of the Directorate General of Primary Education and the Computer Center of the Ministry of National Education.

How your example addresses food security and nutrition challenges. Describe linkages to social protection policies / school food programs / sustainable food systems (Approximately 600 words)

Adequate and balanced nutrition plays an important role in the protection and development of the health of the individuals, hence ensures a better quality of life.

Adequate and balanced nutrition is the acquirement of daily energy and nutrients the body needs in sufficient amounts. The energy and nutrients the body needs are taken into our bodies through our nutrients.

The food is divided into four groups for adequate and balanced nutrition. These four food groups consist of meat & meat products, milk & dairy products, vegetables &
fruits, and breads & cereals. Milk & milk products group includes products such as yogurt, cheese and milk powder made from milk. These foods are important sources of many nutrients including protein, calcium, phosphorus, vitamin B2 and vitamin B12. All age groups, especially adult women, children and young people, should consume this group every day. Particular attention should be paid to gaining milk drinking habits during childhood and adolescence, and children and adolescents should be encouraged to consume these nutrients on a daily basis in recommended amounts. As we all know, the habits we have in the future are based on childhood gains. Adequate and balanced nutrition habits are also gained in these periods. It is very important for children to grow up consuming dairy products in the age of growth and development in order to protect them from osteoporosis (bone thinning) seen in old ages. Milk consumption in our country is lower than that in European Union (EU) countries. The amount of drinking milk consumed per capita in our country is around 24 liters annually. This amount is over 100 liters in many European countries. However, every age group needs to drink two glasses of milk or consume dairy products every day. Protecting and improving the health of our children and our young people are among the priorities of our Ministry.

What are the elements needed for the practice to be institutionally, socially, economically and environmentally resilient and/or sustainable? (Approximately 500 words)

The Program covers 32,000 schools with 6 million students. The main reason behind the fact that this Program has been continuing for 7 years without disruption in our country, which has 790 thousand km² surface area and very different climatic conditions, is that all segments of society (consumers and producers) adopted this Program. The entire budget of the program is funded by the state, and this facilitates its sustainability.

In addition to contributing to the nutrition of our children through making them gain milk drinking habits, the Program has positive social and economic results by balancing the increasing milk production.

This program, which aims to increase milk consumption in our country, is also supported by the politicians, and regularly budget transfer is carried out every year.

The impact of your example on national policies and people’s lives. What indicators have been used to measure it? (Approximately 400 words)

Since the program does not cover the entire school year for various reasons, it is not possible to conduct a qualitative study. However, considering that milk production is increased by an average of 5 percent each year, it is estimated that this produced milk is consumed.
Key lessons (positive and negative) that can be learned from your example and how gaps, obstacles and any other adverse conditions were addressed (approximately 600 words)

**Negative aspects:** it was very difficult for UHT milk producers to cover the production and distribution of milk in 2012, which is the beginning of the Program in our country. New jobs were created for milk distributions to 32,000 schools. Given the geographical conditions of our country, transportation was a big problem. The distribution schedule was brought forward (applied in an earlier date) in order to overcome this problem. Therefore, the UHT milk distribution is made because the transportation is easy and the expiry date is long.

Lactose intolerance was frequently seen in the first distribution periods in regions where our country has a low level of development.

This problem was encountered in our country because the lactose intolerance study in general was not performed at the national level. Once the students have gained the milk drinking habit, most of these problems decreased to the lowest level.

Since milk cannot be distributed during the whole academic year, it is not possible to conduct studies in a scientific sense. For example, some issues such as how much the consumption habit is increased, whether there is height and weight increase in children or not cannot be quantitatively measured.

**Positive Aspects:** In some parts of our country, there were students who drink milk for the first time because of the program.

Milk producers have been supported through trying to make children and young people gain consumption habits.

Even though there is not any measurable value, there is a change in the milk consumption habits when the social responses are taken into account.

The Program is supported by NGOs, politicians and by the public.

**Sources and/ or additional background material** (please provide weblinks when possible or send the material to fsn-moderator@fao.org)