The 1st World School Milk Day was celebrated in September 2000 and has since become an annual event held in many countries throughout the world. The proposal to hold the celebration was originally made in an e-mail discussion forum moderated by FAO (Dairy Outlook) and it has since been promoted each year by FAO.

In 2014, World School Milk Day was celebrated in approximately 25 countries. Activities centred on school-based events and included the distribution of milk, seminars, essay and art competitions, media reports and promotional events. Here is a selection of events from a range of countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Newspaper report on the history of school milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Cultural and educational events and the distribution of milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>Essay competition held</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
*School-based activities*

Chile  
*Milk information day held*

China  
*Press release*

Colombia  
*Nutritional value of milk promoted*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Milk distribution in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Milk-themed events held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Dairy product tasting organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Promotion events and press conference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Germany

School-based events and exhibitions organized

Italy

Press release

Kenya

School-based activities

Korea Rep. of

Art competition held

Malaysia

School-based activities and distribution of milk
**Myanmar**  
_Distribution of dairy products and exhibition_

**New Zealand**  
_Day of celebration held in many schools, including art competition_

**Norway**  
_Seminar and Press release_  
[More info](#)

**Peru**  
_School-based activities_

**UK**  
_Ideas for celebrations provided by the agricultural promotion agency_  
[More info](#)
UK (Northern Ireland)  
Promotion of the value of milk and launch of a nutrition booklet

United States  
School-based celebrations

Uruguay  
Nutritional value of milk promoted

Source: Information derived mainly from the Dairy-Outlet e-mail discussion forum, plus internet.

**WORLD SCHOOL MILK DAY – last Wednesday in September**

**How did it start?** Following discussion on FAO’s email discussion lists regarding selecting a particular day on which school milk could be celebrated internationally, consensus was reach amongst members that World School Milk Day would be celebrated on the last Wednesday in September. This date was chosen because schools were open all the countries surveyed during this month. The end of the month was selected to allow countries in the western hemisphere sufficient time to prepare for this day, as in most of these countries the school year starts in early September. Wednesday was chosen as it was a school day in all countries surveyed.

**The 1st World School Milk Day** was held in 2000 and it has since become an annual event. Every last Wednesday in September, over 30 countries - regardless of whether they are large or small, rich or poor - celebrate World School Milk Day, demonstrating that the interest in school milk is universal.

**The goal of World School Milk Day** is to provide a particular day when attention is focused on this issue and thereby promote such programmes. Importance is lent to the event by the fact that other countries are doing the same thing, on the same day, and that FAO is supporting the activity.

**FAO’s role** is to co-ordinate celebrations by informing people through the Dairy-Outlet and School-Milk lists about the Day and collating information from list members regarding preparations for celebrating this Day and inspire others to join in. From our end here, we can only remind, encourage and promote, but the real ideas and organizing work happens at the national or local level in the various countries.
**How is World Milk Day celebrated?**  World School Milk Day is an "open" day - people are free to celebrate how they wish. Celebrations can be at any level - from national or regional events to individual schools. Some countries have started in a small way and have organized bigger celebrations with each passing year. Big or small, all have a common goal: to draw attention to school milk and thereby promote its consumption.

In celebrating the Day, FAO's involvement can be freely mentioned; however, this does not extend to FAO endorsing a particular branded product. At the same time, a key facet of FAO's work on school milk has been the dual promotion of dairy industry development and good child nutrition. Therefore, branded products and promotions, which are a way of promoting the dairy industry, can be used during celebrations.

Celebrations of past years showed how creative people are in celebrating WSMD. In almost all countries celebrating the Day, free milk is distributed to children in schools. Other activities include sporting events, distribution of educational and promotional material and celebrity visits to schools; also drawing and art competitions are very popular. Often dairy companies act as sponsors of the Day and provide not only free milk but also promotional material such as t-shirts, caps, pens, posters, etc. for the children.

**Let us know how you celebrate the 16th WORLD SCHOOL MILK DAY, 30 Sept, 2015**

Send messages to:  fao-dairy-outlook@fao.org