Harvest of the Month | Fact

Dairy

Dairy products include milk and food products made from milk such as cheese and yogurt. Cheese is produced by coagulation of the protein in milk. Yogurt is produced by bacterial fermentation of milk.

Modern dairy farming began in the early 1900's with the introduction of pasteurization which destroys bacteria that causes milk to spoil. This process extended the shelf–life of milk and allowed it to be shipped farther. Dairy farms have grown over the years to meet the growing demand for dairy products. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 98% of U.S. dairy farms are family owned and operated.

Did you know?

- Pennsylvania ranks 7th in the U.S. in total milk production, with 500,000 cows producing more than 10.2 billion pounds of milk annually.
- The average cow produces 8 gallons of milk per day. That's more than 100 glasses of milk.
- There are approximately 2,000 varieties of cheese.
- It takes 10 pounds of milk to make one pound of cheese.
- Yogurt provides probiotics, or good bacteria, that may help maintain digestive health.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends 2½ cups of low–fat or fat free milk and dairy foods daily for those 4–8 years old and 3 cups for those 9 years and older.

Receiving, Storing, and Serving Milk

When milk is received it should be 40°F or less and should be immediately placed in cold storage in a clean environment that is protected from excessive light exposure. Strong sunlight and fluorescent light can cause off-flavors and destroy vitamins in the milk. This is most likely to occur when milk is packaged in clear containers but it may also occur when milk is packaged in paperboard and colored plastics if light exposure is severe. When unloading milk deliveries, limit the amount of time milk is in direct sunlight and store milk in the cooler and serving areas where light exposure is minimal.

Store milk between 34°F and 38°F. Milk stays fresh longer if maintained at these temperatures. At warmer temperatures, bacteria may grow, shortening the shelf-life of the product. Odors from fruits, vegetables and/or unclean conditions can pass through milk containers and be absorbed into the milk. Ideally, milk should be stored in a clean refrigerator or cooler separate from other foods. If separate storage is not possible, store milk as far away from other foods as possible, especially those that have strong odors. Milk that is received first should be used first. Place new supplies at the rear of the refrigerator so that stock can be rotated properly. Order and rotate stock so all milk is served well before its sell–by date.

Milk in serving lines should be kept in coolers and maintained below 40°F. At room temperature, half–pint cartons of milk can warm 10°F in 20 minutes. Do not overload coolers to allow for air circulation. Return unserved milk to the storage refrigerator or cooler promptly.

Check your local health codes for specific requirements regarding receiving, handling, storing, and serving milk.

Nutrition

Nutrients provided by dairy products include calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein. Dairy products are the primary source of calcium in American diets. Calcium is important in building bones and teeth and maintaining bone mass. Potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. It also helps maintain cell growth and normal water levels in the body. Vitamin D helps to maintain proper levels of calcium and phosphorus in the body, thereby helping to build and maintain bones. Protein is an important building block of muscles, bones, skin, and blood.

School Meal Connection

Fluid milk is required to be offered for school breakfast and lunch. Schools may offer fat–free (flavored or unflavored) or low–fat (1% or less) (flavored or unflavored.) Schools must offer a variety (at least two) of choices and at least one must be unflavored. (Whole milk and 2% milk are not allowable.) Cheese and yogurt, although also considered dairy products, are considered meat/meat alternates in the school breakfast and lunch meal patterns.

Smoothies in School Meals

Many schools are finding smoothies are popular among students when offered as part of school meals. USDA allows for crediting for the milk contained in fruit smoothies whether commercially produced or prepared in–house as long as the product meets federal meal requirements documented through a Product Formulation Statement or CN Label (if commercially produced) or standardized recipe (if prepared in–house.) Schools must ensure that the required 8 ounces of fluid milk is available and that at least one other unflavored, fat–free, or low–fat fluid milk is offered to meet the variety requirement for school meals. USDA also allows for the crediting of yogurt in smoothies as a meat/meat alternate given the same documentation requirements as described above.

Finding Dairy Products

Child Nutrition Program operators may be able to find local dairy products in a variety of ways. You can search for products through the PA Preferred website or connect with local producers through farmer's markets or farm markets. You can also find brands of Pennsylvania milk and retailers that sell Pennsylvania milk on the "Choose PA Dairy" website.

Tip: Milk that includes the PA Preferred logo is sourced entirely from Pennsylvania farmers. If it does not include the PA Preferred logo, look for the plant code. If this code begins with "42" this indicates that the milk is processed in Pennsylvania and sourced predominantly from Pennsylvania dairy farms.

Recipe | Strawberry Yo-Peachy Parfait

Number of portions: 100

Portion size: 1 parfait

Credits: 1 parfait provides 0.5 oz eq grain, 1.0 oz eq meat/meat alternate, and ½ cup fruit.

PrimeroEdge Recipe Code: #SR109133

		1. Preheat convection oven to 200°F.
Peaches, canned, diced	50 cups	2. Drain peaches.
Maple syrup	1⅓ cups	3. In a large bowl, combine maple syrup, oil, and vanilla extract. Whisk ingredients until well blended; do not allow to sit or the mixture will begin to separate.
Oil, vegetable	1 cup	
Vanilla extract	1 Tbsp + 1 tsp	
Oats, quick	25 cups	4. Toss oats with syrup mixture and stir well to coat evenly. Place parchment paper on two full sheet pans per 100 servings. Spread half the granola mixture (12.5 cups) on each full sheet pan. Bake for 30 minutes, stir the mixture, then bake for another 30 minutes or until oats are toasted evenly.
Strawberry Greek yogurt	50 cups	5. Place ½ cup (#8 scoop) of yogurt in the bottom of a 12-ounce cup; top with ½ cup (#8 scoop) of peaches. Then add ¼ cup (#16 scoop) of granola to each cup.

Source: *Chef Designed School Breakfast*. Idaho Child Nutrition Programs.

Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website (www.paharvestofthemonth.org) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

Developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Penn State University (Project PA).

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organization imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.