



New York Farm Bureau • 159 Wolf Road - Suite 300 • Albany, New York 12205 • (518) 436-8495 Fax: (518) 431-5656

March 31, 2022

Mayor Eric Adams
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Ban of Chocolate Milk in NYC Schools

Dear Mayor Adams:

On behalf of New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm advocacy organization, I am writing to express our concern regarding the proposed ban of chocolate milk in New York City school meals. While we understand the intent is to serve healthy meals to children, this ban will have the opposite effect on children who receive meals at school and the nutrients they receive, as well as substantial economic impact on New York dairy farmers who are already experiencing hardship.

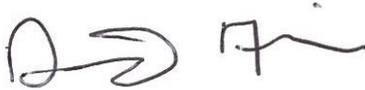
New York State is home to over 4,000 dairy farms and represents New York's largest agriculture industry. Our dairy farmers are proud to supply a wholesome product to school children all across New York, including New York City. There have been many studies that show the importance of dairy in children's diets and the benefits of the vitamins it provides. Research has shown children who drink flavored milk consume more of the important nutrients related to healthy growth and development such as calcium, vitamin D, and potassium, in comparison to non-flavored milk drinkers. Additionally, studies have shown that flavored milk consumption is not connected with weight gain or even high total daily sugar intake in children¹.

Flavored milk is a popular choice among children, with over two-thirds of milk served in schools being flavored milk, making it an essential way for children to receive their nutrition. Research has shown that removing flavored milk reduced nutritional intake in children, increased the amount of food waste as well as reduced the number of school meals served. In a study conducted by Cornell University of Oregon schools, the total daily milk sales decreased by 9.9% when flavored milk was removed from the cafeteria and contributed to a 6.8% decrease in children eating lunch². In the Los Angeles Unified District, a 78% decrease in milk waste was shown when flavored milk was returned as an option as well as an increase in number of school meals served³. The Dietary Guidelines and school meals program, as developed by the U.S Department of Agriculture, allows for the consumption of both flavored and unflavored milk. Studies have shown that milk consumption at the noon meal is critical and is correlated with overall diet quality as well as calcium intake⁴.

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Further, I respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this issue further and serve in an advisory capacity to your Food Policy Transition Team to be a helpful resource, particularly on the benefits of procuring New York-produced agricultural products including more stringent environmental and labor standards to those products produced out of state.

Sincerely,



David Fisher
President

cc: Kevin King, Deputy Secretary for Food and Agriculture
Richard Ball, Commissioner, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

¹Murray, R., & Bhatia, J. J. S. (2015). Snacks, Sweetened Beverages, Added Sugars, and Schools. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 135(1098), 578–579. doi: 10.1542/peds.2014-3902

Johnson RK, Frary C, Wang MQ. The nutritional consequences of flavored-milk consumption by school-aged children and adolescents in the United States. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2002;102(6):853–856

Murphy MM, Douglass JS, Johnson RK, Spence LA. Drinking flavored or plain milk is positively associated with nutrient intake and is not associated with adverse effects on weight status in US children and adolescents. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2008;108(4):631–639

² Hanks AS, Just DR, Wansink B (2014) Chocolate Milk Consequences: A Pilot Study Evaluating the Consequences of Banning Chocolate Milk in School Cafeterias. *PLOS ONE* 9(4): e91022.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0091022>

³ Los Angeles Unified School District. L.A. Unified Seeks to Reduce Waste via Pilot Programs Addressing Milk Waste. 2016. <https://home.lausd.net/apps/news/article/625445>

⁴ Murray, R., & Bhatia, J. J. S. (2015). Snacks, Sweetened Beverages, Added Sugars, and Schools. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 135(1098), 578–579. doi: 10.1542/peds.2014-3902

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