



SAME ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

NO CERTIFIED ARTIFICIAL COLORS

HEALTHY KIDS

**Healthy Dairy
in Schools**

Commitment

The Healthy Dairy in Schools Commitment

The Healthy Dairy in Schools Commitment is a voluntary, proactive effort by America's dairy companies to support families and students in their efforts to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle. Nearly 30 million children and adolescents participate in federal school meal programs including breakfast and lunch. Dairy products including milk, cheese, and yogurt play a central role in school meals by providing 13 essential nutrients students need for healthy growth and development.

- **Milk** is the top source of calcium, potassium, phosphorus, and vitamin D in kids ages 2-18.
- **Cheese** provides a high-quality source of protein, calcium, phosphorus, and vitamin A.
- **Yogurt** is a nutrient-dense source of protein, calcium, riboflavin, vitamin B12, and phosphorus that may reduce the risk of type-2 diabetes.

As parents, policymakers, and nutrition professionals support making wholesome dairy options available for our nation's schoolchildren, the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), on behalf of America's school milk, cheese, and yogurt processors, is leading the Healthy Dairy in Schools Commitment, a voluntary effort to eliminate the use of certified artificial colors Red 3, Red 40, Green 3, Blue 1, Blue 2, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6 in all milk, cheese, and yogurt products sold to K-12 schools for use in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program by the start of the 2026-2027 school year. The vast majority of dairy products sold to schools today do not contain any certified artificial colors, as most dairy processors chose not to use or have removed or replaced these ingredients. The goal of this new Commitment is to eliminate the use of certified artificial colors in any milk, yogurt, and cheese products sold to schools by July 2026 and in the years ahead.

Our Commitment: Eliminate Certified Artificial Colors in School Foods

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year (July 2026), all companies supporting the Commitment pledge to eliminate the use of certified artificial colors Red 3, Red 40, Green 3, Blue 1, Blue 2, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6 in all milk, cheese, and yogurt products sold to K-12 schools for use in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program. This effort does not apply to foods that fall outside of reimbursable federal school meals.

While the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has deemed certified artificial colors safe for use in foods when used in accordance with FDA regulations, the federal government is considering how to phase out the use of these ingredients in the U.S. food supply. At the same time, several states have passed laws banning the use of all certified colors in foods sold to schools, and additional states are expected to follow. The proactive Healthy Dairy in Schools Commitment will ensure wholesome, nutrient-rich dairy options remain available to students everywhere regardless of changing state regulations, reflecting the dairy industry's longstanding dedication to child nutrition.

Moving forward, all companies supporting the Healthy Dairy in Schools Commitment have pledged to discontinue products containing certified artificial colors or to reformulate products with natural ingredients, joining the majority of companies that will continue making products for schools without certified artificial colors.

The Healthy Dairy in Schools Commitment further demonstrates our industry's longstanding promise to provide healthy, nutritious dairy options to school kids everywhere. This includes developing new and reformulated products without certified artificial colors, reducing added sugar, and working with school meals professionals and nutrition professionals to educate school staff and students about the benefits of healthy milk, cheese, and yogurt options in the diets of children and adolescents.

Learn more about the Healthy Dairy in Schools Commitment.

www.healthydairyinschools.org

NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF DAIRY

- ✓ **13 essential nutrients**, including high-quality protein, calcium, phosphorous, vitamin D, and potassium
- ✓ **3 of the 4 nutrients of concern**, as identified by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- ✓ **Number one source of protein**, vitamin D, calcium, and potassium in the diets of children ages 2-18
- ✓ **Better bone health** and lower risk for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease
- ✓ **Dairy offers a unique package of nutrients** that may help mental health alongside a healthy diet and lifestyle
- ✓ **Milk, cheese and yogurt** are all natural sources of immune-boosting nutrients like zinc and protein

Addressing Nutritional Gaps in Student Diets

The most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans is clear – children are not receiving enough essential nutrients for growth, development, healthy immune function, and overall wellness. In fact, U.S. federal dietary guidelines stress that between 68% and 94% of school-age boys and girls are currently failing to meet recommended levels of dairy intake. Healthy dairy options in school meals offer the most important opportunity of the day for children to get the critical nutrients they need. For years, parents and nutrition professionals have agreed that milk and dairy products must remain key building blocks in school meals. The Healthy Dairy in Schools Commitment ensures students will continue to have access to healthy and wholesome milk, cheese, and yogurt options without certified artificial colors, affirming U.S. dairy's dedication to our nation's youth.



Learn more about the **Healthy Dairy in Schools Commitment.**

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Dairy Foods Association

