Devoted to Dairy: An American Dairy Farmers Blog

By: Becky Gabriel

Growing up on a dairy farm can be a lot of work for my kids. They have to get up early to help milk our cows in the cold, the rain, and even on Christmas morning! It’s tough, but they know that we have to work hard to be able to make money for our family. We expect to work hard, every day.

One thing that I didn’t expect, though, was that my kids wouldn’t like to drink milk! As a dairy farmer, I know that when kids don’t drink milk, they miss out on lots of important nutrients that they need to grow and stay healthy. Calcium, potassium, and vitamin D are important nutrients kids get from milk.

A Tasty Solution

My kids were losing critical nutrition—and they weren’t alone. Many kids today are missing out on the nutrients they need because they aren’t choosing nutrient-rich foods. Luckily, there’s a tasty solution: flavored milk! Flavored milk has the same great group of essential nutrients as white milk, and kids will drink even more when it’s flavored—I know my kids do! That means that kids who drink delicious flavored milk actually get more of their nutrients. Research has shown the kids who drink flavored milk do not consume added sugar, fat, or calories, and are not heavier than kids who do not drink milk.

Kids need to get from 800–1,300 grams of calcium a day depending on their age, and drinking flavored milk can help them get the 3 daily servings of milk that dietary guidelines recommend. When kids drink flavored milk, we are making a smart trade—the small amount of added sugars in low fat and fat-free flavored milks are a fair trade for the valuable added nutrients supplied. As an added bonus, drinking nutrient-rich flavored milk helps kids improve their overall diets!

A Popular Choice

There are some schools and activist groups who are fighting against keeping low fat chocolate milk as an option in cafeterias. But, if chocolate milk—which is the most popular milk choice for students—is taken out of schools, kids will completely miss out on those important nutrients. Many health professionals argue that getting rid of chocolate milk will do more harm than good.

So raise a glass of chocolate milk with me and my kids. Cheers to all those vitamins and minerals that chocolate milk provides to keep our bones and our bodies healthy and strong!