2025 HOUSE AGRICULTURE

HB 1132

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agriculture Committee
Room JW327C, State Capitol

HB 1132
1/16/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to whole, two percent and flavored milk served in schools.

3:35 p.m. Chairman Beltz opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Beltz, Vice Chairman Hauck, Representatives Anderson, Dobervich, Holle, Hoverson, Kiefert, Nehring, Olson, Rios, Schreiber-Beck, Tveit, Vollmer

Member Absent: Representative Henderson

Discussion Topics:

- Healthy development of children
- Schools dispersion
- Milk alternatives
- Nutritional substitute

3:30 p.m. Representative Dawson Holle, District 31, Mandan, ND, introduced and submitted testimony #29428.

3:42 p.m. Lynelle Johnson, Director of Child Nutrition and Food Distribution, ND Department of Public Instruction (DPI), testified as neutral and submitted testimony #29420.

Additional Written Testimony:
Jack Wandler, Mandan, ND, submitted testimony in favor #29110.
Thomas Catalano, Mandan, ND, submitted testimony in favor #29129.
Cari Kramer, Superintendent, Solen Public School District, submitted testimony in favor #29252.
Ryan Gregg, ND Farmers Union, submitted testimony in favor #29372.
Andrew Holle, CEO/Owner, Northern Lights Dairy, submitted testimony in favor #29424.
Conny van Bedaf, President, Milk Producers Association of ND, submitted testimony in favor #29435.
Steven A. Nagel, Practitioner, 180 Health Solutions, submitted testimony in favor #29558.

3:47 p.m. Chairman Beltz closed the hearing.

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

Dear Members of the House Agriculture Committee,

Hi, my name is Jack Wandler, and I'm 14 years. I'm writing to talk about milk at school. Right now, we only have skim milk or 1%, and honestly, most kids don't like them. They're watery and not very tasty.

Whole milk and 2% are not just better tasting—they're also really healthy. They have important nutrients that help kids grow strong and stay active. I think if schools could serve these kinds of milk again, more kids would drink milk instead of throwing it away.

This is important because healthy kids do better in school and sports. I hope you'll think about this and make it happen. Thank you for your time and for caring about kids like me!

Sincerely,
Jack Wandler

Dear Members of the House Agriculture Committee,
My name is Thomas Catalano, and Im Eighteen years old. Im writing to ask you to allow schools to serve whole milk and 2% milk again.
I strongly believe that bringing back 2% and whole milk to K-12 schools would be a great decision for several reasons. Firstly, both 2% and whole milk are rich in essential nutrients that are crucial for the growth and development of children. Whole milk, for instance, is an excellent source of vitamins A and D, which are vital for maintaining healthy bones and a strong immune system. These vitamins play a significant role in preventing illnesses and ensuring that students can attend school regularly and participate actively in their education.

Moreover, the higher fat content in 2% and whole milk can help keep students feeling fuller for longer periods. This can be particularly beneficial in maintaining concentration and energy levels throughout the school day. When students are not distracted by hunger, they are more likely to focus better on their studies and perform well academically. For example, a study conducted by the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that children who consumed higher-fat milk had better cognitive performance and were more attentive in class compared to those who consumed low-fat or skim milk.

In addition to the nutritional benefits, offering 2% and whole milk can also cater to the diverse dietary needs and preferences of students. Some children may have higher energy requirements due to their participation in sports and other physical activities. For these students, the additional calories and fats in 2% and whole milk can provide the necessary fuel to support their active lifestyles. Furthermore, having a variety of milk options can encourage students to consume milk more regularly, ensuring they receive the calcium and other nutrients needed for healthy development.

Lastly, it's important to consider the taste and satisfaction that comes with drinking 2% and whole milk. Many students find these milk options more palatable compared to low-fat or skim milk, which can sometimes be less satisfying. By providing milk options that students enjoy, schools can promote better dietary habits and encourage a lifelong appreciation for nutritious foods.

In conclusion, reintroducing 2% and whole milk in K-12 schools would not only enhance the nutritional intake of students but also support their overall well-being, academic performance, and satisfaction with school meals. It is a step towards fostering a healthier and more productive learning environment for all students.

Sincerely,Thomas CatalanoSenior/Mandan High

69th Legislative Assembly
Cari Kramer
Superintendent, Solen Public School District

HOUSE BILL NO. 1132

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cari Kramer, and I am the Solen Public School District which serves the communities of Solen and Cannon Ball, North Dakota. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit my online testimony to speak in favor of House Bill No. 1132.

I am in support of allowing 2%, whole, and flavored milk to be served as options in school lunch programs. I believe that providing a variety of milk options is essential for promoting student health, ensuring balanced nutrition, and supporting the diverse preferences and needs of our students.

As the superintendent of a high poverty school district, including 100% free and reduced meals, ensuring my students have their basic needs met is an ongoing challenge and worry for me and my staff. We are continuously searching for avenues of improvements and resources. Research supports the notion that, for children in poverty, whole milk and 2% milk is generally considered the best options due to because the added fat content can provide a more substantial source of energy, potentially helping them feel fuller for longer and preventing them from skipping meals due to hunger, especially when access to other nutritious foods may be limited. The majority of the schools in my district have very limited access to a diverse diet. The nutrients in whole milk and 2% milk also helps with filling kids' energy tanks throughout the day. It is not my opinion that skim milk and 1 % milk are poor options for kids, it is simply these options are good for students who are eating a well-balanced diet. However, when students who have a limited diet and food source are limited to skim milk and 1% milk, they are missing out on vital nutrients needed for their growth and development. Additionally, after twenty plus years of working with our youth, it is safe to say the 2% milk and whole milk are not contributing factors to the childhood obesity epidemic that is plaguing our youth.

Additionally, when flavored milk is offered, research indicates that school milk consumption rates increase, benefiting students who may otherwise miss out on important nutrients. This is particularly important in the context of school lunch programs, where adequate nutrition plays a critical role in students' health, learning, and academic performance.

By providing a broader selection of milk choices, schools can ensure that all students have access to a nutritious option that aligns with their tastes and dietary needs, encouraging higher participation in the meal program.

Allowing these milk options to be served in bulk milk dispensers in school cafeterias also supports local dairy farmers. By increasing demand for a variety of milk options, we help sustain local agriculture and ensure that dairy farming remains a viable industry in our state. Additionally, the inclusion of more milk options supports the dairy industry's continued innovation and product development, which benefits the economy and enhances the nutritional quality of school meals. This bill has the potential to make a meaningful impact to our great state by enhancing consumer access to locally produced dairy products while supporting our state's dairy farmers. Additionally, the use of bulk milk dispensers will decrease the need for packaging materials and reduce the waste of materials. Another benefit of bulk milk dispensers will cut down on the waste of the milk in itself and eliminate worries such as outdated milk, milk waste and delivery issues.

In conclusion, allowing 2%, whole, and flavored milk to be served as options in our school lunch programs is a common-sense approach to improving the nutrition and health of all students. It provides essential nutrients that children need for growth and development, encourages milk consumption, supports local dairy farmers, and meets the diverse preferences and dietary needs of our students. I strongly urge the committee to support House Bill 1132 that allows these milk options in schools, as it will have lasting benefits for the health and well-being of our students.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, this concludes by written testimony. I thank you for the opportunity.

Contact:
Ryan Gregg, Lobbyist
rgregg@ndfu.org I 701.952.0104

Testimony of
Ryan Gregg
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
House Agriculture Committee
January 16, 2025

Chairman Beltz and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1132. My name is Ryan Gregg, and I am speaking on behalf of the North Dakota Farmers Union (NDFU). We support HB 1132, which would allow school districts to offer whole, two percent, and flavored milk to students.

NDFU's member-driven Policy & Action states: "We support the free milk program in our school systems. We encourage the continued availability of flavored milk in our school systems. We support the availability of whole milk in schools." We believe it is important for students to have access to a variety of nutritious food options.

We respectfully request a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1132. Thank you for your time and consideration.

TESTIMONY ON HB 1132
HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
January 16, 2025
By: Lynelle Johnson, Director of Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs
701-328-4565
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

Chairman Beltz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lynelle Johnson, and I am the Director of Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI). I am here to provide information regarding HB 1132.

The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs are federally administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) based on federal legislation at 7 CFR 210 for lunch and 7 CFR 220 for breakfast. The program is implemented at the state level by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. These programs aim to ensure that students receive nutritious meals that support their health and academic success.

As part of our role in administering USDA Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs, our office is responsible for ensuring that schools meet these guidelines through administrative reviews, training, and technical assistance. Schools that fail to comply with USDA requirements risk losing federal reimbursement funding. One key requirement is adherence to the USDA meal pattern. The five components of the meal pattern are protein, grain, fruit, vegetable, and milk. These

five components make up a "reimbursable meal." In addition to providing these components, schools must also meet specific calorie, fat, and sodium requirements to ensure nutritious and balanced meals.

USDA regulations require schools to offer two varieties of milk at breakfast and lunch: flavored or unflavored skim (fat-free) or 1% (low-fat) milk. Schools must offer an 8-ounce serving size for both breakfast and lunch. The method of serving milk is flexible; it can be provided in individual cartons, jugs, or bulk dispensers. However, when using a bulk method, schools must ensure students take the required 8-ounce serving. (7 CFR 210 (d)(1)).

Under USDA guidelines, 2% and whole milk cannot be included as part of a reimbursable meal. These products may only be offered as an additional item at no cost to the student. Additionally, any item sold to students outside of the reimbursable meal program during the school day must meet USDA Smart Snack Guidelines. Since 2% and whole milk do not meet these guidelines, they cannot be sold to students during school hours. (7 CFR 210.11)

Chairman Beltz and Members of the Committee, this concludes my prepared testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Andrew Holle

Owner and General Manager of Northern Lights Dairy, Mandan, ND 58554

Member of Milk Producers Association of ND

Greetings, Chairman Beltz and members of the House Agriculture Committee. Thank you for taking this opportunity for me to address my support of HOUSE BILL 1132.Over the years, dairy has been put under the microscope of how healthy it is, but not just over-all health, but it is further scrutinized of WHICH milk is better for you. Now most dieticians and nutritionist will agree that milk is an essential part of a healthy diet, especially in children, due to providing 13 essential nutrients such as this study elaborates on from the Utah State University at (https://extension.usu.edu/nutrition/research/dairy-in-your-childs-diet) and I will place the full article after my testimony for easier reading and also a chart enclosed from: https://www.americandairy.com/dairy-diary/13-essential-nutrients-in-milk/

But recent research has come out to debate whether fat-free or low-fat milk is actually better for children and their development or not and the research is in FULL support of full-fat milk, or as we call it whole milk. I have enclosed an article in the back of my testimony and here is the link: https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/whole-vs-skim-milk#TOC_TITLE_HDR_6.

So needless to say I think it is long over-due that whole milk, 2%, and even flavored milk be available in school since research shows that both the fat from milk and the calories have no scientific link to childhood obesity or other detrimental health issues. We are Northern Lights Dairy which is a 5 generation dairy farm is proud that we are always striving to produce the highest-quality, nutritious milk that it is our mission statement. We are thrilled at the opportunity for children to be able to choose which milk they would like to drink with the lunches and are excited for children to get the best nutrition to help their mind and bodies grow which will allow them to thrive in school and in life.

UtahStateUniversity

NutritionExtension

For many people, a healthy and well-balanced diet includes foods from all the food groups. The dairy group is especially important for children and youth because of the high amounts of protein, calcium, and vitamin D that are used to build strong bones and reduce the risk of chronic diseases later in life (Thorning et al., 2016). This fact sheet will present the health benefits of dairy and bust some common myths to assist you in making informed decisions when purchasing dairy products for your children. This fact sheet also includes information on dairy alternatives for children who, for one reason or another, do not consume dairy products.

What Are the Health Benefits of Dairy Products?

- Children who are exposed to highly allergenic foods (milk, peanuts, eggs, wheat, etc.) earlier in life have a lower risk of developing a food allergy (Chin, Chan, & Goldman, 2014; American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP], 2013).
- Children build 40% of their bone mass between the ages of 9-14 and 90% of their bone mass by their late teens. Dairy products contain all of the crucial vitamins and minerals used for this process in one small package (Ryan, 2017). Specific nutrients and benefits are listed in Table 1.
- A variety of milk products, such as yogurt, often contain probiotics. These microorganisms may contribute to a variety of health benefits, although more research needs to be done in this area (Brown-Riggs, 2014; Fernández, Hudson, Korpela, de los Reyes-Gavilán, 2015).
- Dairy products have characteristics that protect the enamel of children's teeth, creating stronger teeth and a healthier mouth (Abd-elmonsif, El-Zainy, Abd-elhamid, 2017).
- Milk provides higher amounts of protein, calcium, and potassium per calorie than any other commonly consumed food (Rozenberg et al., 2015). For example, for a child 4-8 years of age, an 8oz glass of milk provides 40% of their daily protein needs, 50-60% of their daily calcium needs, and 10% of their daily potassium needs (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA], n.d.; USDA, n.d.)

Table 1. Benefits of Key Nutrients Found in Milk

ent	Benefits
	Protein aids in strong bone development, along with muscle and tissue repair.
	Calcium is a key mineral in developing healthy bones. It also likely protects against cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure.
m	Along with aiding in bone health, potassium is essential for a healthy heart.
	Zinc aids in immune function.
rus	Phosphorus aids in the upkeep of strong bones and boosts enamel and tooth health.
D	Vitamin D promotes calcium absorption in the intestines and aids in bone growth.

Dairy Myth Busters

Myth: Dairy is harmful to my child's health.

Fact: Dairy is power packed with essential vitamins and minerals that will help your child build strong bones and prevent some bone-related diseases. Consumption of dairy products does not appear to be associated with heart diseases (Yu & Hu, 2012). In fact, some studies have found that consuming dairy may protect against chronic diseases such as type II diabetes, certain cancers, and hypertension (Erikson et al., 2015; Thorning et al., 2016). However, children who are lactose intolerant or allergic to milk and other dairy products, should consume dairy alternatives for optimal health and safety. Table 2 includes a list of milk alternatives and how their nutrient amounts compare to cow's milk.

Myth: Organic milk is healthier than regular milk.

Fact: In order to be labeled "organic" cow's milk must come from dairy cow's that: 1) are not treated with antibiotics, 2) are not treated with hormones, 3) have access to an organic-certified pasture for grazing, 4) are fed only 100% organic feed, and 5) live in conditions that support the health and natural behaviors of cows (USDA, n.d.). With that said, there is no difference in the nutritional content of the nine key nutrients (protein, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin A, potassium, phosphorus, vitamin B12, riboflavin, and niacin),found in both organic and regular cow's milk (Magkos, Arvaniti, & Zampelas, 2003). As a result, regular and organic milk are

both nutritious and healthy beverage options for your children. Select the milk that fits in your food budget and supports your personal values.

Myth: Waiting to expose my child to dairy products will decrease their chance of a milk allergy.

Fact: Exposing children to highly allergenic foods earlier in life has actually been shown to help prevent food allergies (Chin, 2014). Introduction of dairy products is recommended around 6 months of age when a baby starts eating solid foods (Fleischer, 2013). If your infant has asthma, eczema or a family history of food allergies, consult your pediatrician before offering your infant highly allergenic foods such as dairy products (Chin, 2014). Also keep in mind, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends waiting until the child is one year of age before serving them cow's milk to drink. Up until age one, breast milk and infant formula are the best fluids parents can offer (Martin, Ling, & Blackburn, 2016). From 1-2 years of age, most children should drink whole cow's milk instead of lower fat options unless they have a family health history that may suggest a need for a lower fat option (Fleischer Michaelsen, Hoppe, Lauritzen, & Molgaard, 2007).

Myth: Raw milk that is unpasteurized is healthier.

Fact: Milk or milk products that have not been pasteurized are considered raw. The process of modern pasteurization includes increasing the temperature of milk to at least 161° F, followed by rapid cooling. This pasteurization process eliminates harmful bacteria and does not alter or eliminate any nutrient values within dairy products (AAP, 2014). The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly encourages the consumption of pasteurized milk since the risk of foodborne illness is much lower (AAP, 2014). This is an important consideration especially for pregnant women, infants, and children (Maldonado, Glode, & Bhatia, 2014).

Myth: Dark leafy greens will provide my child with just as much calcium as a glass of milk.

Fact: It is true that dark leafy vegetables contain high amounts of calcium, however the calcium is not absorbed as well in the body as calcium from dairy. As a result, it can be hard for children to consume enough dark leafy greens to meet their calcium needs. For example, a child would have to eat 16 cups of spinach in one day to match the amount of available calcium in one glass of milk (Rozenberg, 2015).

Factors to Consider When Selecting Common Milk Alternatives

Many children do not consume dairy products for medical, health, religious, or personal reasons. There are many alternative types of milk available on the market, see the table 2 below for some more commonly available types. However, it is likely you will find many more types on your supermarket shelves. When shopping for alternative milk products keep in mind they are all different in the amount of key nutrients they contain. Check the nutrition facts label and choose a type of milk product with as much calcium and vitamin D as cow's milk. If possible, choose one with just as much protein as cow's milk as well. As with cow's milk, be aware that flavored versions (chocolate, vanilla, etc.) can be high in sugar. The image to the right provides an example of where an individual can look on a nutrition facts label, to find information on the content of the protein, calcium, and vitamin D within the product of their choice. This is a quick and easy way to make sure your child is getting the desired nutrients!

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Cup (240mL)

Amount per Serving

Calories 150	Fat Cal 70
	%Daily Value
Total Fat 8g	**12%**
Saturated Fat 5g	**25%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	**10%**
Sodium 120mg	**5%**
Potasium 350mg	**10%**
Total Carbohydrate 12g	**4%**
Dietary Fiber 0g	**0%**
Sugars 11g	
Protein 8g	**16%**
Vitamin A 4% •	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 30%	Iron 0%
Vitamin D 25%	

*This nutrition facts label is for 1 cup of whole milk and may slightly vary depending on the brand.

Milk	Taste	Substitutions	Nutrient Comparison
ose free 's milk	• Generally a thicker consistency • A little sweeter than regular cow's milk	• Can substitute directly for milk in all baking and drinking	• Lactase enzyme added • Nutrients are the same as cow's milk
ond Milk	• Thinner consistency • Nutty flavor	• Can substitute directly for milk in all baking and drinking	• Low in saturated fat • Poor source of protein • Low calcium (unless fortified)
y Milk	• Generally creamier • Nutty or sweet flavor • Pronounced flavor	• Can substitute directly for milk in all baking and drinking	• Low in saturated fat • High in protein • Contains less calories than regular milk • Naturally a good source of potassium • Good source of calcium (when fortified)
e Milk	• True milk flavor • Light and sweet	• Avoid using for cooking savory dishes	• Low in protein • Low in fat • High in carbohydrates • Least likely to cause allergic reactions • Some brands will add calcium, vitamin D, and B vitamins

Four Fun Ways to Incorporate Dairy

The USDA's Dietary Guidelines has different dairy recommendations for children of various age groups (USDA, 2017). For example, it is recommended that each day, 2-3 year olds consume 2 cups, 4-8 year olds consume 2 ½ cups, and 9-18 year olds consume 3 cups of dairy products. Here are some ways to help your child get enough dairy in their diet.

1. Add low-fat cheese sticks to your child's lunch is a quick and easy way to incorporate more dairy into their day.

2. Freeze small dollops of a yogurt and fruit mixture to make delicious yogurt bites for another easy way for your child to get more dairy! Yogurt bites are a healthier alternative to popsicles and will be great for the hot summer months.
3. Yogurt parfaits in the morning will keep your kiddos tummy full until snack time. These beautiful creations can be layered in a clear plastic cup and have an added bonus of yummy fruit and whole grain granola. Quick sample recipe: layer a cup or bowl in the following order from bottom to top; berries or fruit of choice, yogurt of choice, top with granola or cereal! Other toppings can include, but are not limited to: coconut, sliced nuts, chia seeds, and fresh fruit.
4. Try cottage cheese and crackers as a speedy snack. This protein-packed snack will be sure to keep them full until dinnertime. As an added bonus, try whole grain crackers to fuel their afternoon adventures!

Dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and cheese can be an important part of a wellbalanced diet for children. Dairy products are rich in important nutrients such as protein, calcium, and vitamin D. Admittedly, there are valid circumstances when children, for various reasons, do not consume dairy products. It is important to know what alternative products are available for these children to make sure they are still meeting their nutritional needs during each stage of rapid growth and development.

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https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/whole-vs-skim-milk#TOC_TITLE_HDR_6

Is Whole Milk Better Than Low Fat and Skim Milk?

Medically reviewed by Jared Meacham, PhD., RD, CSCS — Written by Becky Bell, MS, RD and Celia Shatzman — Updated on February 3, 2023

Recent studies suggest that skim milk might not always be the best health-promoting choice. Though many official guidelines have long recommended avoiding whole milk, it can actually be a great addition to a nutrient-focused diet.

Milk is one of the most naturally nutritious beverages on the planet, which explains why it's often a staple in school lunches and a popular drink for people of all ages.

For decades, nutrition guidelines have recommended low fat dairy products for everyone over 2 years old. However, in recent years, scientists have called this recommendation into question (1Trusted Source).

This article will review how the different types of milk stack up to determine which is the best option.

Catherine Falls Commercial/Getty Images

Different types of dairy milk: Whole, low fat, and skim

There are several types of milk available in the dairy aisle of most grocery stores, which mainly differ in their fat content.

Whole milk is sometimes referred to as "regular milk" because the amount of fat in it has not been altered. Skim and 1% milk are produced by removing fat from whole milk.

Fat content is measured as a percentage of the total liquid by weight. Here's the fat content of popular milk varieties:

- **whole milk:** 3.25% milk fat
- **low fat milk:** 1% milk fat
- **skim:** less than 0.5% milk fat

This table summarizes the nutrients in 1 cup (237 mL) of several milk varieties (2Trusted Source, 3Trusted Source, 4Trusted Source):

	Skim milk	Low fat milk	Whole milk
Calories	84	106	152
Carbs	12 grams	13 grams	11.5 grams
Protein	8.5 grams	8.5 grams	8 grams
Fat	0.2 grams	2.5 grams	8 grams
Saturated fat	0.1 grams	1.5 grams	4.5 grams
Omega-3 fatty acids	0 grams	0.01 grams	0.04 grams
Calcium	25% of the DV	24% of the DV	24% of the DV
Vitamin D	14% of the DV	13% of the DV	12% of the DV
Phosphorus	21% of the DV	20% of the DV	20% of the DV

Since fat contains more calories per serving than any other nutrient, milk with a higher fat content is higher in calories (5Trusted Source).

Though each type of milk contains a similar amount of micronutrients, the amount of vitamin D can differ slightly. However, because most milk manufacturers add vitamin D to milk, each variety generally contains a similar amount (6Trusted Source).

Another significant nutritional difference between milk varieties is the amount of omega-3 fatty acids, a type of fat that has been linked to many health benefits, including improved heart and brain health, as well as lowered inflammation. The more fat a cup of milk has in it, the higher its omega-3 content (7Trusted SourceTrusted Source).

Additionally, studies have shown that organic whole milk contains an even higher amount of omega-3s than regular whole milk. However, this distinction is mostly seen in "grass-fed" milk, which is almost always organic anyway. So if you're looking for higher omega-3s per serving, check to make sure you're buying grass fed milk (8Trusted Source, 9Trusted Source, 10Trusted Source).

SUMMARY

The major difference between the types of dairy milk available is fat content. Whole milk contains more fat and calories than skim milk.

Whole milk: Is it unhealthy?

For years, nutrition guidelines have been instructing people to avoid whole milk, mainly due to its saturated fat content.

Mainstream nutrition recommendations advise limiting saturated fat because it can increase cholesterol levels, which is a risk factor for heart disease (11Trusted Source).

Based on this information, experts made the assumption that saturated fat must increase the risk of heart disease. However, there was no experimental evidence to prove that this was true (12Trusted Source, 13Trusted Source).

In the 1970s, public policy was adopted based on this assumed connection between saturated fat and heart disease. As a result, official guidelines instructed people to reduce their saturated fat intake (12Trusted Source).

A cup (237 mL) of whole milk contains 4.5 grams of saturated fat, which is about 20% of the daily amount recommended by the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For

this reason, the guidelines recommend consuming only low fat or skim milk (4Trusted Source, 13Trusted Source).

In recent years, this recommendation has been called into question. There is emerging experimental data to indicate that eating moderate amounts of saturated fat does not directly cause heart disease (14Trusted Source, 15Trusted Source).

SUMMARY

In the past, whole milk was considered unhealthy because of its saturated fat content, but recent research does not fully support this recommendation.

What to know about saturated fat

While those with high cholesterol levels or heart disease may need to defer to their doctor's recommendations and monitor their intake of saturated fat, it can still be enjoyed as part of a balanced diet for individuals without those two conditions.

In fact, multiple studies suggest that increased saturated fat intake is not directly associated with a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, heart attack, or heart disease-related death (16Trusted Source, 17Trusted Source, 18Trusted Source).

Originally, researchers believed that saturated fat increased cholesterol levels, which in turn increased the risk of heart disease. However, the relationship between saturated fat and cholesterol is much more complicated.

For starters, although saturated fat does increase levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol, it also increases levels of HDL (good) cholesterol, which can actually help protect against heart disease (19Trusted Source, 20Trusted Source).

Additionally, there are different types of LDL, and it's the very small, dense particles of LDL that have the most damaging effects on the heart and arteries. Though saturated fat can increase cholesterol levels, it actually changes LDL from the small, dense particles to the large, less harmful particles (21Trusted Source, 22Trusted Source, 13Trusted Source).

Furthermore, other research suggests that certain foods high in saturated fat may impact heart health differently. For example, one review showed that cheese and yogurt were actually linked to a lower risk of heart disease, while red meat and butter were tied to a higher risk (23Trusted Source).

For this reason, it's important to consider the overall nutritional composition of an ingredient rather than focusing solely on the individual nutrients it contains (24Trusted Source).

Even though a lot of new research is questioning the direct connection between saturated fat and heart health, it still can increase cholesterol levels in some individuals. Therefore, those with heart disease or high cholesterol levels may want to consider swapping out foods high in saturated fats for other ingredients instead.

In particular, studies show that replacing saturated-fat foods with whole grains or polyunsaturated fats — a type of fat found in foods like olive oil, nuts, and seeds — could be beneficial for long-term heart health (25Trusted Source, 26Trusted Source).

SUMMARY

Though it's still important to moderate your saturated fat intake if you're living with health conditions like high cholesterol or heart disease, studies are now showing that moderate saturated fat consumption does not directly increase the risk of heart disease in otherwise healthy individuals. Additionally, certain foods that contain saturated fat may affect heart health differently.

Always talk with your doctor about your specific health issues before incorporating new dietary patterns.

Whole milk and weight management

Many people avoid drinking whole milk because they assume the extra fat and calories will cause them to gain weight. However, many studies have shown that consuming high fat dairy products may actually help support weight management instead.

According to one 2016 study of 18,438 women, increased intake of full fat dairy products was linked to a lower risk of weight gain over an 11-year period. On the other hand, there was no significant association between low fat dairy intake and weight gain (27Trusted Source).

Another study from 2017 found that dairy fat intake was not linked to a higher risk of weight gain, heart disease, or type 2 diabetes (28Trusted Source).

Similarly, one 2020 review of 29 studies concluded that full fat dairy consumption was not associated with weight gain or fat gain in children (29Trusted Source).

The relationship between milk and weight management has been a research topic for several years, and findings have been inconsistent. However, most of these studies either include all types of dairy products or focus on low fat dairy (30Trusted Source, 31Trusted Source, 32Trusted Source).

In studies that look at only high fat dairy products, like whole milk, there is a pretty consistent connection between full fat dairy and lower body weight, suggesting that whole milk can be a great addition to a well-rounded, nutrient-dense diet and may help you maintain a moderate weight.

SUMMARY

While more research needs to be done, there is not much evidence that drinking whole milk instead of skim causes weight gain.

Can whole milk lower your risk for chronic disease?

Studies have found that whole milk could be linked to a lower risk of several chronic conditions, including:

- **Metabolic syndrome.** Multiple studies show that drinking whole milk may be associated with a lower risk of metabolic syndrome, a group of risk factors that can

increase the risks of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes (33Trusted Source, 34Trusted Source, 35Trusted Source).

- **Type 2 diabetes.** In one large study, people with the highest amount of dairy-derived fatty acids in their bloodstreams had a 44% lower rate of diabetes. However, more research is needed, as some other studies have found that full fat and nonfermented dairy products may be associated with a higher risk (36Trusted Source, 37Trusted Source, 38Trusted Source).
- **Infertility.** Although more research is needed, some studies suggest that drinking milk may be associated with improved reproductive health and fertility in women (39Trusted Source).

It's important to note that many other factors, such as physical activity, daily diet, and personal health history all play a role in the development of chronic diseases. Therefore, drinking whole milk is one small part of a much larger equation.

SUMMARY

Drinking whole milk as part of a nutritious diet may actually have some health benefits, including a reduced risk of metabolic syndrome. It may also protect against type 2 diabetes and improve reproductive health for women, but more research is needed.

The advantage of choosing skim milk

There are some situations where skim milk may be the best choice for you.

For example, if you're following a very low calorie diet, choosing skim milk may be a better option as it's lower in calories but contains about the same amount of protein per cup (237 mL) (2Trusted Source, 4Trusted Source).

Skim milk is also considered a nutrient-dense ingredient, meaning it provides a large dose of vitamins and minerals with very few calories.

In fact, skim milk is one of the richest food sources of calcium, providing around 325 mg per cup. This is even higher than the calcium content of whole milk, which is 306 mg per cup (2Trusted Source, 4Trusted Source).

It can also be a great way to increase your intake of several other important vitamins and minerals, including vitamin D, phosphorus, and potassium (2Trusted Source).

SUMMARY

Skim milk provides approximately the same amount of protein and calcium as whole milk but contains fewer calories.

The bottom line

One of the main reasons whole milk was called out was because of its saturated fat content, which was previously directly connected to issues like heart disease.

However, new research questions this direct connection. While individuals who are already living with high cholesterol and heart disease should defer to their doctor's advice and limit their intake of saturated fat, people without such conditions may be able to consume it in moderate amounts without it impacting their overall health.

Talk with your doctor about your specific health history and what's the best option for you when it comes to saturated fat intake.

How we reviewed this article:

Current Version

Feb 3, 2023

Written By

Becky Bell, Celia Shatzman

Edited By

Jessica DiGiacinto

Feb 17, 2022

Written By

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VIEW ALL HISTORY

Medically reviewed by Jared Meacham, PhD., RD, CSCS — Written by Becky Bell, MS, RD and Celia Shatzman — Updated on February 3, 2023

Legislative Assembly

North Dakota
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COMMITTEES:
Human Services
Political Subdivisions

1/15/2023

Good morning, Chairman Beltz, members of the House Agriculture Committee,

For the record, my name is Dawson Holle, and I am honored to serve the great people of District 31. Today, I am here to introduce HB 1132, a bill that would allow schools to offer whole milk and 2% milk through bulk milk dispensers.

For far too long, federal regulations have restricted schools to serving only fat-free and 1% milk. While these restrictions were put in place with the best of intentions, they have had unintended consequences. As a result, milk consumption in schools has declined, causing many kids to . These are not just statistics—they represent missed opportunities to nourish our children with the wholesome, essential nutrients that milk provides.

Science Is on Our Side

We now have the science to support a change. Recent studies have debunked outdated concerns about whole milk and 2% milk, showing that these options are not only safe but vital for the healthy development of children. For example, research published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that children who drink whole milk have higher vitamin D levels and lower body mass indices compared to their peers who consume lower-fat milk (Boreham et al., 2022). This is not just opinion—this is peer-reviewed, evidence-based science.

Whole milk is a nutritional powerhouse. It provides:

- Calcium to build strong bones. It provides 13 essential nutrients.
- Potassium for muscle function and healthy blood pressure.
- Vitamin D, essential for growth and immunity.
- Healthy fats that support brain development, especially in young children (Vanderhout et al., 2018).

These are not luxuries; they are necessities for the health and development of the next generation.

Empowering Schools, Supporting Farmers

This bill is about more than just nutrition; it's about restoring choice and empowerment. It doesn't mandate that schools serve whole or 2% milk, but simply gives them the option. It's about trusting parents, schools, and communities to make the best decisions for their children.

Furthermore, this bill provides vital support for North Dakota's dairy farmers. Our dairy industry is the backbone of rural communities, and the men and women who work in this field are the stewards of our agricultural heritage. They rise before dawn, work in all conditions, and dedicate their lives to producing the best milk in the nation.

According to the National Milk Producers Federation, expanding milk options in schools could boost fluid milk consumption, directly benefiting farmers by creating a sustainable market for locally produced milk (National Milk Producers Federation, 2023). Supporting this bill isn't just about supporting farmers—it's about investing in the economic vitality of rural North Dakota.

A Legacy of Health and Common Sense

As legislators, we often think about the legacy we want to leave for future generations. This is our chance to leave a legacy of health, common sense, and support for North Dakota's families and farmers.

By passing this bill, we send a powerful message:

- We believe in science.
- We trust schools and parents to make informed decisions.
- We honor the hard work and resilience of our dairy farmers.
- Most importantly, we believe in giving every child in North Dakota the very best.

This is not just a policy decision—it's a commitment to the future. It's about ensuring that every child in this state has the opportunity to grow healthier, stronger, and more prepared to meet the challenges ahead.

Thank you for your time.

References:

1. Boreham, C., et al. (2022). *Whole milk and body composition in children*. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 115(3), 570-578.
2. Vanderhout, S., et al. (2018). *The role of dairy fat in childhood development*. Journal of Pediatrics, 154(5), 345-352.
3. National Milk Producers Federation. (2023). *The economic impact of dairy in rural communities*. Retrieved from NMPF website.

HB1132

The Milk Producers Association of North Dakota is delighted to see HB1132 being considered by the House.

Having whole and two percent milk in schools will nourish the children and reduce food waste. Research has shown that the consumption of milk at higher fat levels is linked to lower childhood obesity.

Whole milk is a powerhouse that brings the nutrition children want and need.

Please DO PASS HB1132.

Conny van Bedaf

President MPA of ND

Testimony in Support of the Sale of Raw Milk Products

House Ag Committee,

I urge a do pass on the legalization and sale of raw milk products in our state, backed by scientific research from peer-reviewed journals. While there a risks with raw milk, just like virtually any other real, living food source, for some reason milk is singled out as “scary” or “dangerous”.

Here are several key points to consider, beyond clinical experience in lifestyle related health care, that we see many people who change to raw dairy experience a night-and-day difference in improvement in various health problems:

1. Preservation of the Microbiome:

The human microbiome and preservation of a healthy microbiome, is being more and more validated as a cornerstone to overall health. Raw milk contains a diverse array of beneficial bacteria, enzymes, and probiotics that are integral to a healthy gut microbiome. Research by Butler et al. (2020) found that intake of unpasteurized milk is associated with increased Lactobacillus abundance in the human gut, which is recognized for its probiotic properties. This study supports the idea that raw milk can enhance digestion by aiding in the breakdown of lactose, contributing to gut health and potentially improving immune function. The enzymes present aid in digestion, and are denatured with the pasteurization process.

2. Nutritional Integrity:

Raw milk is noted for its higher content of vitamins A, C, and B12 due to its unaltered state. A review by Lucey (2015) discusses how pasteurization can lead to nutrient loss, emphasizing that raw milk offers these nutrients in their natural, most bioavailable forms.

3. Allergenicity:

Evidence suggests that raw milk might is less allergenic than pasteurized milk for some individuals. With 10% of the population showing allergenicity, this impacts a major portion of the population. The PARSIFAL study (2006) and the GABRIELA study (2011) both concluded there is a significant inverse association between farm milk consumption and childhood asthma, highlighting that raw milk consumption is linked with lower rates of allergies and asthma in children.

4. Economic and Local Benefits:

The legal sale of raw milk would support small-scale dairy farms by allowing them to capitalize on their high-quality product. This not only bolsters local economies but promotes sustainable farming practices. Although direct research on this topic is sparse, the economic benefits of local agriculture are well-documented in agricultural economics literature.

7. Historical Context:

The long history of raw milk consumption without pasteurization underpins its natural role in human diets and has historically been seen as a tool for helping to heal the body

In conclusion, the body of research supports the health, nutritional, and economic benefits of raw milk. I urge you to consider the legalization of raw milk sales under a framework that emphasizes education, quality control, and consumer awareness. This can not only empower consumers but also enrich our agricultural sector and potentially improve public health outcomes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dr. Steve Nagel

Doctor of Chiropractic

180 Heath Solutions

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agriculture Committee
Room JW327C, State Capitol

HB 1132
1/17/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to whole, two percent and flavored milk served in schools.

11:50 a.m. Chairman Beltz opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Beltz, Vice Chairman Hauck, Representatives Anderson, Dobervich, Holle, Hoverson, Kiefert, Nehring, Olson, Rios, Schreiber-Beck, Tveit, Vollmer

Member Absent: Representative Henderson

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

11:51 a.m. Representative Hauck moved Do Pass.

11:51 a.m. Representative Tveit seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Donna Henderson	AB
Representative Dawson Holle	Y
Representative Jeff Hoverson	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Dennis Nehring	Y
Representative SuAnn Olson	AB
Representative Nico Rios	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Bill Tveit	Y
Representative Daniel R. Vollmer	Y

Motion passed 12-0-2.

11:53 a.m. Representative Nehring will carry the bill.

11:54 a.m. Chairman Beltz closed the meeting.

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1132 (25.0325.02000)

Agriculture Committee (Rep. Beltz, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1132 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2025 SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

HB 1132

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee
Fort Union Room, State Capitol

HB 1132
3/6/2025

A bill relating to whole, two percent, and flavored milk served in schools.

9:00 a.m. Chairman Luick called the meeting to order.

Members present: Chairman Luick, Vice-Chair Myrdal, Senator Marcellais, Senator Weston, Senator Weber, Senator Lemm

Discussion Topics:

- Bulk milk dispensers
- Declining milk consumption
- Children's health and nutrition statistics
- Benefits of whole and two percent milk
- ND dairy farmers and local industry
- Federal funding, reimbursement, and financial burdens
- National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and the National Department of Agriculture
- USDA Meal pattern and Smart Snack Guidelines
- Sugar content of flavored milk

9:01 a.m. Representative Dawson Holle, District 31, introduced the bill, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39116.

9:06 a.m. Ryan Gregg, ND Farmer's Union, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39148

9:08 a.m. Lynelle Johnson, Director of Child Nutrition and Food Distribution for the ND Department of Public Instruction, testified in neutral and submitted testimony #39100.

9:14 a.m. Chairman Luick closed the hearing.

9:14 a.m. Senator Myrdal moved a Do Pass.

9:14 a.m. Senator Lemm seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Larry Luick	Y
Senator Janne Myrdal	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Richard Marcellais	Y
Senator Mark F. Weber	Y
Senator Kent Weston	Y

Motion passed 6-0-0.

Senator Lemm will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Matt Herman resident of Ashley, ND, submitted testimony #38971 in favor.

Samuel A. Wagner, Ag and Food Field Organizer, Dakota Resource Council, submitted testimony #39059 in favor.

Jack Piper, student at Mandan High School, submitted testimony #39106 in favor.

Jacob Walsh, student at Mandan High School, submitted testimony #39111 in favor.

Cari Kramer, Solen Public School District, submitted testimony #39242 in favor.

Casey Bjoralt, ND Academy of Nutrition, submitted testimony #38498 in opposition.

Michelle Wagner, Bismarck Public Schools, submitted testimony #39037 in opposition.

9:15 a.m. Chairman Luick closed the hearing.

Audrey Oswald, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1132 (25.0325.02000)

Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Luick, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1132 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

Opposition to HB 1132

Dear Chairman Luick and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (NDAND), we respectfully oppose HB 1132, which proposes offering whole and 2% milk in North Dakota schools. This bill raises concerns for nutrition professionals regarding children's health.

The USDA's National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs are designed to provide balanced, nutritious meals, and current guidelines permit only skim (fat-free) or 1% (low-fat) milk as part of a reimbursable meal. Whole and 2% milk, which contains significantly more calories and fat, is not allowed in these meals. Additionally, whole and 2% milk does not meet USDA Smart Snack Guidelines and cannot be sold during school hours.

Allowing whole and 2% milk would increase students' caloric intake, as the extra calories cannot be offset by adjustments to other meal components. With childhood obesity already being a major concern, the additional calories could exacerbate existing health issues.

Offering whole and 2% milk would also present logistical challenges. Since it cannot be sold during school hours, schools would need to absorb the costs without generating revenue. Furthermore, implementing bulk milk delivery systems would require significant infrastructure changes to track portions accurately and maintain product quality and temperature. The added complexity and cost of such a system may not be sustainable, especially given the limited nutritional benefits of whole and 2% milk.

In conclusion, NDAND is concerned that offering whole and 2% milk would unnecessarily increase calorie consumption and place additional burdens on school nutrition services, without providing a meaningful nutritional advantage. We urge the committee to adhere to current federal standards, which prioritize balanced, health-conscious meals for students.

We thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

The North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Testimony in Support of HB 1132

Matt Herman
Ashley ND

A cup of skim milk, about 90 calories.

A cup of 1%, about 105 calories.

A cup of 2%, about 125 calories.

A cup of whole milk, about 150 calories.

We are NOT going to create additional obesity pandemics on a maximum of 60 calories per serving.

If skim and 1% were the solution to obesity, we wouldn't see it any longer.

Wholesome animal fats are an important part of a wholesome diet. Consumption, especially at breakfast time, leads to an enhanced feeling of being full and will lead to lower levels of consumption of all foods.

So much of what was believed to be true about nutrition and how bad fat is in the diet are simply wrong. It's the low-fat, highly processed foods and seed oils that are actually making the problem they sought to solve worse.

Let the kids have their milk.

Chairman Luick and Members of the Committee:

My name is Michelle Wagner, and I serve as the Child Nutrition Program Director for Bismarck Public Schools and the Legislative Chair for the North Dakota School Nutrition Association. As a registered dietitian with 13 years of experience in school nutrition, I am providing testimony in opposition to HB 1132.

This bill, which proposes allowing 2% or whole milk in school meal programs, presents significant challenges. Here are a few key reasons for my opposition:

Compliance with Dietary Guidelines for Americans

School breakfast and lunch programs are required to design menus that adhere to specific ranges for calories, fat, saturated fat, and sodium, as outlined by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Offering higher-fat milk would make it difficult to meet these requirements.

Federal Regulations and Reimbursement

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) permit only fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk as part of a reimbursable meal (7 CFR 210.10(d)). Whole and 2% milk are not creditable for reimbursement, meaning they cannot be counted toward the required food components for a reimbursable meal.

Ethical Concerns

To serve higher-fat milk, schools might exploit a “loophole” by having students claim a reimbursable meal with three components, pass the point of sale, and then retrieve whole or 2% milk separately. This practice could undermine the integrity

of school meal programs and sends the wrong message to students about circumventing established guidelines.

Operational Challenges

Many schools have moved away from bulk milk dispensers due to issues with excessive spillage and sanitation concerns. Additionally, school nutrition staff—many of whom are older workers—would need to lift 25-40 lb. milk bags up into the milk machines, increasing the risk of workplace injuries.

Increased Costs

Since whole and 2% milk are not reimbursable, offering them would increase costs for schools. These additional expenses could strain already tight budgets and detract from other essential program needs.

Nutritional Impact

While some organizations support offering whole milk in schools, leading health authorities—including the American Heart Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, which rely on scientific research—recommend low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk for long-term health.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose HB 1132. Our school meal programs are designed to meet federal nutrition standards, support student health, and operate efficiently. Allowing whole or 2% milk would undermine these goals.

Sincerely,

Michelle Wagner, RD, SNS

Child Nutrition Program Director, Bismarck Public Schools

Legislative Chair, North Dakota School Nutrition Association

Testimony HB1132

Sam Wagner
Ag and Food Field Organizer
Dakota Resource Council
1902 E Divide Ave
Bismarck ND 58501
Testimony in Support for HB1132

To the Honorable Chairman and the members of the Committee. We submit these remarks on behalf of DRC.

To the House Ag Committee,

We at the Dakota Resource Council are writing in support of HB1132. This bill is a great way to reduce waste from milk cartons while providing a sustainable cost-saving option to provide milk to our children. These dispensers have been used in cafeterias and colleges for years and are effective at dispensing milk. We also support that this is also an optional bill and not a mandatory requirement. Seeing that there have been no changes in the language of this bill we will continue to support it.

We urge a DO PASS on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

TESTIMONY ON HB 1132
SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
March 6, 2025
By: Lynelle Johnson, Director of Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs
701-328-4565
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

Chairman Luick and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lynelle Johnson, and I am the Director of Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI). I am here to provide information regarding HB 1132.

The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs are federally administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) based on federal legislation at 7 CFR 210 for lunch and 7 CFR 220 for breakfast. These programs are implemented at the state level by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, and they aim to ensure that students receive nutritious meals that support their health and academic success.

As part of our role in administering USDA Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs, our office is responsible for ensuring that schools meet these guidelines through administrative reviews, training, and technical assistance. Schools that fail to comply with USDA requirements risk losing federal reimbursement funding. One key requirement is adherence to the USDA meal pattern. The five components of the meal pattern are protein, grain, fruit, vegetable, and milk. These

five components make up a "reimbursable meal." In addition to providing these components, schools must also meet specific calorie, fat, and sodium requirements to ensure nutritious and balanced meals.

USDA regulations currently require schools to offer two varieties of milk at breakfast and lunch: flavored or unflavored skim (fat-free) or 1% (low-fat) milk. Schools must offer an 8-ounce serving size for both breakfast and lunch. The method of serving milk is determined at the local level; it can be provided in individual cartons, jugs, or bulk dispensers. However, when using a bulk method, schools must ensure students take the required 8-ounce serving. (7 CFR 210 (d)(1)).

Under USDA guidelines, 2% and whole milk cannot be included as part of a reimbursable meal. These products may only be offered as an additional item at no cost to the student. Additionally, any item sold to students outside of the reimbursable meal program during the school day must meet USDA Smart Snack Guidelines. Since 2% and whole milk do not meet these guidelines, they cannot be sold to students during school hours. (7 CFR 210.11)

Chairman Luick and Members of the Committee, this concludes my prepared testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

My name is Jack Piper, and I am an Sophomore at Mandan High School here in North Dakota. I am here today to ask for your support on **HB 1132**, which would allow schools to serve whole milk and 2% milk again.

As a student, I see every day what kids actually drink—and what they don't. Many of my classmates don't like the skim or 1% milk that's offered now. A lot of it gets thrown away, which means we're wasting milk and not getting the nutrients we need.

Whole milk and 2% milk taste better and are healthier than people think. They have the vitamins and healthy fats that help us stay full and focused in class. I know that as a dairy state, North Dakota produces some of the best milk in the country, and we should be able to have the option to drink it at school.

This bill is about giving kids a choice—a choice to drink the milk that is best for them. I ask you to support **HB 1132** so students like me can have the milk we actually want to drink.

Thank you for your time.

Hello, my name is Jacob Walsh, and I'm a junior at Mandan High School here in North Dakota. I'm here today to ask for your support on HB 1132, a bill that would allow schools to serve whole milk and 2% milk again.

Milk has always been a big part of my life. At home, I drink milk every day because it actually tastes good, and I know it's good for me. Whole milk is rich, creamy, and filling—it's something I actually enjoy. But when I get to school, the milk we're offered is nothing like what I drink at home. The skim and 1% milk we get now tastes watered down, and a lot of students don't even bother drinking it. I see cartons of milk being thrown away every day because people don't like it. That's a huge waste, not just of milk, but of the nutrition that's supposed to help us stay healthy and focused during the school day.

People might say that skim and 1% milk are "healthier," but that's not really true. Whole milk and 2% milk have important vitamins and healthy fats that actually help keep us full and give us energy. When we're hungry or not getting the nutrition we need, it's harder to concentrate in class and perform well in school. North Dakota is a dairy state—we produce some of the best milk in the country. So why aren't we allowing students to drink it?

HB 1132 isn't about forcing anyone to drink whole or 2% milk—it's about giving students a choice. Right now, we don't have that choice. If students prefer skim or 1% milk, that's fine, but many of us would rather drink the kind of milk we actually enjoy. If we had access to whole and 2% milk, I know a lot more students would actually drink it instead of throwing it away.

I strongly encourage you to support HB 1132 and give students like me the option to drink real milk at school. It's time to stop wasting milk and start giving us a choice. Thank you for your time.

Legislative Assembly

North Dakota House of Representatives

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COMMITTEES:
Human Services
Political Subdivisions

Good morning, Chairman Luick, members of the Senate Agriculture Committee,

For the record, my name is **Dawson Holle**, and I am honored to serve the great people of **District 31**. Today, I am here to introduce **HB 1132**, a bill that would allow schools to offer **whole milk and 2% milk** through **bulk milk dispensers**.

For far too long, **federal regulations** have restricted schools to serving only **fat-free and 1% milk**. While these regulations were implemented with good intentions, they have had **unintended consequences**. **Milk consumption in schools has declined**, and many children are missing out on essential nutrients. These are not just statistics—they represent **real missed opportunities** to nourish our children with the wholesome benefits that milk provides (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019).

Recent studies have **debunked outdated concerns** about whole and 2% milk, demonstrating that these options are not only **safe** but also **beneficial** for children's health. Research published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that children who drink **whole milk** have **higher vitamin D levels** and **lower body mass indices** compared to their peers who consume lower-fat milk (Boreham, 2022). Furthermore, studies from *The Journal of Pediatrics* highlight that **dairy fat** plays a crucial role in **early childhood development** and **cognitive function** (Vanderhout, 2018).

Whole milk is a **nutritional powerhouse** that provides:

- **Calcium** for strong bones and overall development.
- **Potassium** for muscle function and healthy blood pressure.
- **Vitamin D**, essential for growth and immunity.
- **Healthy fats** that support **brain development**, especially in young children (Vanderhout et al., 2018).

These nutrients are not **luxuries**—they are **necessities** for the health and development of the next generation.

This bill is not about **mandates**—it is about **restoring choice** and **empowering local decision-making**. Schools are **not required** to serve whole or 2% milk, but they should have the **option** to do so. We trust **parents, schools, and communities** to make the best decisions for their children.

Additionally, this bill provides **vital support** to **North Dakota's dairy farmers**. Our dairy industry is the **backbone of rural communities**, and the hardworking men and women in this field are **stewards of our agricultural heritage**. According to the **National Milk Producers Federation (2023)**, expanding milk options in schools could **boost fluid milk consumption**, creating a **sustainable market** for locally produced milk. With **only one milk processor in North Dakota**, much of the milk served in schools is transported

from **Kansas, Nebraska**, and Minnesota which **reduces shelf life** and creates significant supply chain challenges (North Dakota Dairy Coalition, 2023). Supporting this bill isn't just about farmers—it's about strengthening **the economic vitality of rural North Dakota**.

As legislators, we often consider the **legacy** we leave for future generations. **This is our chance** to make a lasting impact on the **health of our children** and the **strength of our agricultural communities**. By passing this bill, we send a powerful message:

- We **believe in science** and follow the latest research.
- We **trust schools and parents** to make informed decisions.
- We **support North Dakota's dairy farmers** and their contributions to our economy.
- Most importantly, we **prioritize the health and well-being of our children**.

Before I conclude, I want to address a few important points:

- **This bill does not create a mandate**—it simply **removes restrictions** and allows schools to provide **additional milk choices**. If a school chooses to offer whole or 2% milk and is **willing to cover the cost**, why shouldn't we allow it?
- **Tennessee has already passed similar legislation**, and signed by the Governor and they are implementing it. Federal law states that milk on a **student's tray in the lunch line** must be **1% or fat-free**, but it does **not** regulate milk obtained separately from a **bulk milk dispenser**.

This is more than just a policy change—it is a **commitment** to ensuring that every child in North Dakota has access to the **nutrition they need** to grow **healthier, stronger, and better prepared** for the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

References

1. Boreham, C., et al. (2022). *Whole milk and body composition in children. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 115*(3), 570-578.
2. Vanderhout, S., et al. (2018). *The role of dairy fat in childhood development. Journal of Pediatrics, 154*(5), 345-352.
3. National Milk Producers Federation. (2023). *The economic impact of dairy in rural communities.* Retrieved from NMPF website
4. North Dakota Dairy Coalition. (2023). *Milk processing and supply chain challenges in North Dakota.*
5. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2019). *Milk consumption in schools: Impact of federal dietary guidelines.*

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Testimony of
Ryan Gregg
North Dakota Farmers Union
Regarding HB 1132
Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs
March 6, 2025

Chairman Luick and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on House Bill No. 1132. My name is Ryan Gregg, and I am here on behalf of the North Dakota Farmers Union (NDFU). We strongly support HB 1132, which would enable school districts to offer whole, two percent, and flavored milk to students.

NDFU's member-adopted Policy & Action states: "We support the free milk program in our school systems. We encourage the continued availability of flavored milk in our school systems. We support the availability of whole milk in schools." At its core, we believe that giving students a broad range of nutritious options is essential.

We respectfully ask for a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1132. Thank you for your time and consideration.

69th Legislative Assembly
Cari Kramer
Superintendent, Solen Public School District

HOUSE BILL NO. 1132

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cari Kramer, and I am the Solen Public School District which serves the communities of Solen and Cannon Ball, North Dakota. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit my online testimony to speak in favor of House Bill No. 1132.

I am in support of allowing 2%, whole, and flavored milk to be served as options in school lunch programs. I believe that providing a variety of milk options is essential for promoting student health, ensuring balanced nutrition, and supporting the diverse preferences and needs of our students.

As the superintendent of a high poverty school district, including 100% free and reduced meals, ensuring my students have their basic needs met is an ongoing challenge and worry for me and my staff. We are continuously searching for avenues of improvements and resources. Research supports the notion that, for children in poverty, whole milk and 2% milk is generally considered the best options due to because the added fat content can provide a more substantial source of energy, potentially helping them feel fuller for longer and preventing them from skipping meals due to hunger, especially when access to other nutritious foods may be limited. The majority of the schools in my district have very limited access to a diverse diet. The nutrients in whole milk and 2% milk also helps with filling kids' energy tanks throughout the day. It is not my opinion that skim milk and 1 % milk are poor options for kids, it is simply these options are good for students who are eating a well-balanced diet. However, when students who have a limited diet and food source are limited to skim milk and 1% milk, they are missing out on vital nutrients needed for their growth and development. Additionally, after twenty plus years of working with our youth, it is safe to say the 2% milk and whole milk are not contributing factors to the childhood obesity epidemic that is plaguing our youth.

Additionally, when flavored milk is offered, research indicates that school milk consumption rates increase, benefiting students who may otherwise miss out on important nutrients. This is particularly important in the context of school lunch programs, where adequate nutrition plays a critical role in students' health, learning, and academic performance.