

CHECKOFF PROGRAM CONTINUES TO PROMOTE DAIRY DURING PANDEMIC

We recognize that dairy farming doesn't stop for a virus or any other situation — and your dairy checkoff program doesn't stop either. The American Dairy Association Mideast has shifted its focus to help dairy farmers, our industry partners, our schools and our communities during these challenging times. Here's a snapshot of some of the things we've been doing.

SUPPORTING DAIRY FARMERS

To keep the dairy community informed, ADA Mideast has been sending timely digital updates about how the dairy checkoff has pivoted its work, both at the national and local level, to be impactful. These updates also include helpful resources like the *Dairy Farmer Handbook on Coronavirus Prevention & Management* and printable COVID-19 factsheets and posters in both English and Spanish for the workplace. If you are not receiving these updates, please visit Drink-Milk.com to sign up for our newsletter. **And as always, if you need assistance or have questions, please call us at 614-890-1800.**

DAIRY SALES

As you know, there was a purchasing surge at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic as Americans prepared to stay at home. This caused some dairy cases to be low and prompted grocery stores to set quantity limits on milk purchases. To help address this, ADA Mideast reached out to social media followers and asked them to share limits they were seeing in their local stores. We also engaged the Ohio Dairy Producers Association, Ohio Department of Agriculture and Ohio Farm Bureau to assist. This outreach collectively resulted in news coverage and social media posts seen by millions of people. ADA Mideast directly received more than 2,500 comments and emails reporting purchasing limits on fluid milk.

Armed with this information ADA Mideast, along with Ohio and West Virginia dairy processors, assured retailers their increased needs could be met. We also enlisted the help of the Ohio Grocers Association to issue a special alert urging retailers to lift their milk purchasing limits. In addition, Ohio Governor DeWine and his administration were informed of the situation and asked to reassure consumers that there is not a shortage of milk and dairy foods.

To date, the majority of the top national grocery chains have indicated the limits have been lifted.



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MIDEAST
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SPECIAL EDITION

COVID-19 Dairy Checkoff Report

The American Dairy Association Mideast has shifted its focus to help dairy farmers, our industry partners, our schools and our communities during these challenging times.



SCHOOL MEALS

Your dairy checkoff is helping to ensure the millions of kids who depend on the federal school meal program get the food they need. This is critical not only for the health of our children, but to also maintain the 7% of fluid milk volume that flows through the K-12 school channel.

These unprecedented times have caused school districts to get creative in delivering meals to their students, and ADA Mideast is working hard to help them. For example, ADA Mideast helped schools get access to half gallons of milk to distribute with multiple days of meals to make sure dairy was included. We have helped other schools by providing non-electric cooler bags to keep milk and meals cold. This is in addition to the nearly 2,800 cooler bags ADA Mideast previously provided for school breakfast programs which have also been repurposed to help with meal deliveries. **ADA Mideast will continue to work with dairy processors and school districts to make sure students are not missing out on critical nutrients that are provided by milk and dairy foods.**

While federal funding continues to support school feeding programs during school closures, schools are in critical need of additional funding to help provide meals to their students. Recognizing this is especially true in West Virginia, ADA Mideast, along with DFA-Mideast Area and Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative, sent a letter to Governor Justice asking for emergency state funding. This support would help West Virginia schools purchase the milk they need to ensure children are not missing critical nutrients needed for good health.

ADA Mideast is also working with Dairy Management Inc (DMI) and GENYOUth to provide emergency grants for schools. GENYOUth's *For Schools' Sake* campaign urges corporations, foundations, athletes, influencers and others to make a donation to help schools feed their students. The funds will provide grants to schools nationwide to purchase resources for meal distribution.

COMMUNITIES

To help foodbanks meet their growing needs, your dairy checkoff is helping to broaden access to dairy foods for the increasing number of people facing food insecurity. We are bringing together cooperatives and processors eager to find homes for excess supply and foodbanks.

For example, ADA Mideast convened the Ohio Dairy Producers Association, DFA Mideast Area, National Farmers Organization, Ohio Dairy Foods Association and others to support the Ohio Association of Foodbanks' request for \$25 million in state funding to address a need for emergency food for millions of Ohioans.

Governor DeWine approved nearly \$5 million to be used by June 30 for purchasing milk and dairy products, as well as other foods and essentials, to help those served by Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and statewide pantry network of 3,600 local organizations.

ADA Mideast is now working closely with the Ohio Association of Foodbanks to identify dairy companies as potential vendors.



Facilitating Donations to Foodbanks

Kroger and its dairy cooperative suppliers are donating 200,000 gallons of milk to foodbanks across the country through the end of August as part of its Dairy Rescue Program. Through the program, dairy cooperatives will donate surplus milk normally sold to restaurants, schools and hotels, and Kroger will donate the processing and packaging of the milk. In Ohio, Tamarack Farms Dairy, a Kroger processing plant, and DFA-Mideast Area will work together to donate milk to several Feeding America foodbanks and community organizations to serve those in need.

The Dairy Rescue Program is an expansion of an existing initiative piloted last summer in Ohio that we were instrumental in coordinating. ADA Mideast partnered with the leadership of Kroger, DFA-Mideast Area and the Ohio Association of Foodbanks to develop a milk donation program with the Mid-Ohio Foodbank, which serves over 500,000 Ohioans a year.

In addition, ADA Mideast recently facilitated a donation of more than 21,000 gallons of milk from Borden to nine foodbanks in Ohio, and we will continue to help connect other dairy processors and manufacturers with foodbanks in our region.

ONLINE OUTREACH

Since the start of COVID-19, people are online more than ever before, resulting in a 40% increase in Facebook and Instagram usage in the past month. **Recognizing this, ADA Mideast adjusted our social media strategy to be helpful and provide relevant resources during this time of uncertainty.**

Dairy recipes, tips for storing dairy foods, nutrition information, family-friendly activities and dairy farm videos are resonating well online and reaching millions of consumers. By using third-party data, ADA Mideast is strategically targeting online users by geography, gender, age, household income, occupation, online behaviors and interests which places this timely content across websites and social media platforms the target audience is browsing.

ADA Mideast also created a short video “Because That’s What Families Do” to remind consumers that dairy farmers continue to work hard to produce safe, nutritious milk during these challenging times. The video was heavily promoted via social media and internet advertising for two weeks in April and delivered more than 2.8 million impressions.

VIRTUAL LEARNING

To help keep kids engaged and learning while at home, ADA Mideast has been promoting our educational resources to teachers, Fuel Up to Play 60 advisors and parents. **Resources include downloadable lessons and activities, virtual dairy farm tours, videos and more.**

For college dietetic interns, ADA Mideast developed a “farm to fridge” presentation and self-guided video tour which is being used as a substitute for the dairy farm tours that were scheduled for Spring and canceled due to school closures.

ADA Mideast is also providing resources to assist health and wellness professionals earn continuing education credit while working from home. These resources include webinars about fermented foods, common questions about dairy foods and farming, and dairy’s role in health and sustainable food systems.