

Dairy Consumption Increases at Hartland Schools Thanks to Michigan's 3-A-Day of Dairy Nutrition Education Grant

Milk and dairy product consumption at Farms Intermediate School in Hartland greatly increased during the 2006-07 school year thanks in part to Michigan's 3-A-Day of Dairy Nutrition Education Grant.

The \$5,000 3-A-Day of Dairy grant, sponsored by United Dairy Industry of Michigan, is a state-wide contest that is awarded to an innovative, community-based nutrition education program aimed at empowering kids to become advocates for healthy eating. The 3-A-Day of Dairy grant is designed to improve children's overall diet and help them adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Terri Sincock, food service director for Hartland Consolidated School, designed the winning nutrition education program for 833 fifth- and sixth-graders. Terri has 32 years of experience in the food service industry; the last 22 years in school food service.

"We began the dairy grant by explaining to all the children some of the things we were going to be doing," she says. "The first thing we did was send home a parent pledge asking them to help us ensure students are consuming 3 servings of dairy a day."

In school, students learned about the importance of a healthy diet, sampled dairy foods, and practiced making healthy choices. At home, parents were encouraged to reinforce the nutrition goals by signing a pledge to ensure students consume three servings of milk, cheese or yogurt daily.

Throughout the school year, Terri held several contests where students could learn about the importance of dairy products in their diet and also win fun prizes. She gave away 15 t-shirts a week for 12 weeks for students who chose to do dairy and nutrition worksheets. At the end of the third week, all of the students' worksheets were gathered, one was selected and that student won a 10-speed bicycle and helmet.

Product sampling led Terri to offer additional dairy food choices at lunchtime, and she also began to offer milk in a variety of flavors packaged in plastic bottles with the help of the "New Look of School



Hartland Consolidated Schools Food Service Director Terri Sincock, left, presented three students with awards and prizes for the dairy related posters they created. The school's principal assisted in the presentation.

Milk" – another school-oriented dairy checkoff grant program.

"We didn't sell yogurt smoothies before; we now sell them because the kids are asking for them," Terri says. "We switched all of our milk to the bottled milk and increased milk consumption so much here that I switched to the 'New Look of School Milk' district wide. It increased our milk consumption by 400 bottles of milk per day."

The final contest of the grant challenged the fifth and sixth grade students to create posters containing dairy facts, the reasons it is important to consume dairy products and references where people could find more information on the importance of dairy products. The first place winner received an iPod shuffle.

"It is the Hartland food service department's mission to provide nutritional meals that will help our students make positive choices and perform at their best academically, physically and personally," says Terri, who is active in the Michigan Action for Healthy Kids coalition and the local and state school nutrition associations. "I'm very committed to educating students on the importance of good nutrition and daily physical activity."

2007-08 3-A-Day Grant Winner Announced

Students at Kent Transition Center and Kent Intermediate School District were recently awarded Michigan's 3-A-Day of Dairy Nutrition Education Grant for the 2007-08 school year. The United Dairy Industry of Michigan sponsors the generous grant.

During the upcoming school year, students at Kent Transition Center will research and learn more about the healthy benefits of consuming 3 servings a day of dairy through an educational program they designed themselves.

Highlights of the program will include: a display at the school's annual health fair that features product sampling, the offering and selection of additional dairy products in the school's store, and purchase of a freezer-panel cooler to display and store dairy products at the right temperature in the school store.