Your Dairy Checkoff Check-In
fourth quarter 2021
**Holiday Menu Items:**

**A Handspun Holiday Dream**

Kristal’s holiday-themed Ginger Cookie Milkshake, available November 8–January 9, is made with milk, vanilla ice cream, gingerbread and cinnamon cookies. The milkshake aligns with Nostalgia and Comfort consumer trends. Currently, cookie butter is a trending ingredient. In the adoption phase with 0.4% menu penetration currently and a 38% menu growth predicted over the next four years, The Dairy Alliance has identified cookie butter as a dessert flavor to watch.

**Holiday Bites with Pretzelmaker**

Our food service partner, Pretzelmaker, has their Undeniably Dairy Holiday Box of Bites, featuring pretzel bites with two cheddar and nacho sauces. The promotion runs November 8-January 2 and is marketed with the Undeniably Dairy branding. The Holiday Box of Bites is a convenient, portable, shareable snack. Pretzel bites are a familiar food with mainstream appeal. Though currently found on 1.6% of US menus, pretzel bites have a four-year growth of 45.9% forecasted.

**Grilled Cheese Sandwiches Here to Stay**

Following the success of Tropical Smoothie Café and The Dairy Alliance’s limited time offer (LTO) grilled cheese in 2020, the restaurant chain has added the sandwich to the core menu, as well as other trending flavor options and now features a special LTO grilled cheese each quarter. The Dairy Alliance concept of the Caprese Grilled Cheese LTO made with mozzarella, parmesan and white American cheese, is available until January 9th and is being promoted alongside the Cranberry Truffle Smoothie made with yogurt. Social media conversations mentioning grilled cheese in The Dairy Alliance region have increased 19.84% year over year. The offerings fit consumers’ desire for indulgent, comforting foods with unique flavor profiles.

**Moo Brew Serves Fluid Milk to Students**

The Dairy Alliance’s Moo Brew is seeing tremendous growth. Moo Brew is a pilot program where students enjoy dairy-filled coffee options, appealing to Gen Z’ers who enjoy ordering from coffeeshops like Starbucks. High school students who might not otherwise pair school meals with milk can choose syrup flavors to add into an 8oz. milk and 2oz. iced coffee beverage as an attractive alternative. The program began in three Whitfield County Schools in Georgia, with students eager for customizable beverage options. Since this early success, the program has expanded to 71 schools in our 8-state region.

**2022 Flavor Trends**

Consumer focus on eating healthier and looking for foods that benefit them in some way is a trend that’s here to stay. The best news is that dairy, fluid milk specifically, fits in perfectly with each of them, making the push for innovation more attainable than ever before.

**Here’s the top 5 trends for 2022:**

1. **Flavors that imply immunity**— refreshing citrus, vitamin-C rich hibiscus and anti-inflammatory turmeric are all ingredients that fit this trend. Milk infused with these flavors, like the classic Golden Milk, could be a top seller in 2022.

2. **Nostalgic indulgence**— flavors that remind us of something special, like a childhood treat, will continue to be prominent in the coming year. Try a coconut caramel flavored milkshake or latte with whole milk.

3. **Tropical culinary escapes**— think beyond pineapple and papaya and try a guava smoothie or yogurt with dragon fruit.

4. **Global inspiration**— even though we are slowly getting back to international travels, consumers are still craving the flavors from around the world. Unexpected pairings like cardamom coffee ice cream or hatch chili and mango cheddar cheese.

5. **Bold and unique mocktails**— this category can pull all the trends into one using energy infused milk-based sparkling beverages or indulgent heavy whipping cream to create a lemongrass basil “gin-less” fizz, yuzu colada or a salted caramel white Russian.
The Dairy Alliance’s efforts within our 8-state region build trust and drive milk sales closer to home. The Dairy Alliance’s state-specific efforts in tandem with the efforts of local groups can support one another in maintaining dairy’s strong penetration amongst households at the level most important to you and the consumer.

Kentucky: The Dairy Alliance and the Tennessee Titans awarded Warren County Public Schools a $10,000 Hometown Grant to serve smoothies made with real milk and promote physical activity in three middle schools. This is the first Hometown Grant awarded in Kentucky as more students are made aware of the benefits of choosing milk at mealtimes.

Tennessee: Two virtual farm tours were held in Tennessee this fall: one at Sparkman Farms in Sparta with farmers Johnny and Ashley and influencer George Lockhart and one at Stooksbury Dairy in Jefferson City with farmer Brant and National Fuel Up to Play 60 Ambassador Ian Graber. The tours combined reached over 3,500 students.

North Carolina: Carolina Panthers Fuel Up to Play 60 Ambassador Shaq Thompson visited Grayhouse Farms in Stony Point for a tour introducing him to dairy farming. Filmed portions of the tour were used in a virtual event with Shaq this December, which aims to draw families unfamiliar with dairy to the video for a chance to win great Panthers prizes. The Dairy Alliance and the Carolina Panthers awarded Craven County Schools a $10,000 Hometown Grant to serve nutritious breakfast made with real milk and promote physical activity. Teaching students about the importance of nutrition can grow dairy sales as they mature and develop purchasing power.

Georgia: The Dairy Alliance, GENYOUth and the Kroger Foundation donated $40,000 to Atlanta Public Schools in the fight against student hunger. The funds will help the schools obtain insulated cooler bags to safely transport milk and meals to students. The Dairy Alliance, in partnership with the Georgia Mobile Dairy Classroom, took fairgoers through the dairy story at the Georgia National Fairy in Perry, distributing 15,000 bottles of white and chocolate milk, testing attendees’ dairy knowledge and answering any milk questions over the 10 days.

South Carolina: A virtual farm tour was held at Hickory Hill Dairy, with farmer Daniel and Marketing Director and Agritourism Specialist Jamie Pearson in Edgefield showing the farm’s robotic milkers and on-site bottling facility to curious students. The tour reached over 1,300 students.

Alabama: Dairy advocate and food blogger Holley Grainger, MS, RD partnered with Fuel Up to Play 60 to promote the new Stay Fresh campaign on Talk of Alabama. Stay Fresh promotes nutritious meals for the four quarters of students’ days: breakfast, lunch, after-school and family time. Holley’s four quarters of meals all included dairy, as she highlighted milk and dairy products’ well-rounded nutrition in relation to healthy eating, physical activity and social and emotional wellbeing.

Mississippi: The Dairy Alliance sponsored the Pretty Cow Contest at the Mississippi State Fair. The contest brings awareness of the dairy industry to the public while giving kids the opportunity to express their creativity and relationship with agriculture.

A new training video is available for farmers interested in using social media to promote agriculture. The recording discusses using social media to educate consumers and build trust in regard to agriculture by sharing with consumers what a modern dairy farmer does each day. The training includes an overview of the distinctions between each social media platform.

Social Media Training Video Available

To access the training, go to thedairyalliance.com/professional-resources/farmer-resources/to request the login information.
It’s hard to believe I’ve completed my first full year at The Dairy Alliance as your CEO. First, I’d like to share my gratitude to all of you, our dairy farmers and industry partners, for the support over the last year. It’s been foundational for us as we strive to drive sales and awareness for the dairy community.

Now, more than ever, the work our organization does is critical to creating long-term value for the nutritious milk produced here in the Southeast. As 2021 draws to a close, I want to take the opportunity to look back on a few successes of the year:

- Increased trust in dairy by 30% among 251,900 students for Adopt a Cow and around 2,500 students per VFT
- Increased fluid milk sales at Convenient Stores – 15 - 17% lift (on average)
- Improved the milk experience placing 33 new Dispensers and 71 Moo Brew programs in schools
- Grew our digital platforms with a 221% increase in website traffic and social media engagements up 3000% year over year
- Developed our three results-oriented core strategies, paving the way for our 2022-23 strategic plan
- Strengthened collaboration and investment from DMI, MilkPEP and other State and Regions

I’m so proud of these accomplishments and the dozens more not listed above! The innovative ideas, tireless work to promote and protect dairy by the team here at The Dairy Alliance is evident.

Looking ahead to the coming year, I’m most excited about momentum — the momentum we’ve created this year and the momentum that’s going to drive results in 2022. We will continue to be dedicated to the dairy farmers in the Southeast, working diligently on outcomes-based strategies and objectives that move the needle on trust and awareness while growing sales.

Dairy Management Inc (DMI) recently launched Reset Yourself with Dairy, a campaign targeted at Gen Z, that builds relevancy in dairy’s health benefits encouraging consumers to choose real dairy over plant based. Reset Yourself with Dairy focuses on four main wellness areas important to Gen Z: immunity health, calmness, energy and digestive health. The wellness areas have universal Gen Z appeal, especially for stressed students and young professionals. Content focusing on Gen Z’s hectic lives will make them seek a quick reset with dairy products.

The campaign kicked off in November and is already seeing great results!

The Importance of Sports Nutrition for Student Athletes

Research shows that chocolate milk is the ultimate recovery beverage for athletes, making partnerships with student athlete centric organizations an excellent fit for dairy promotion. The Dairy Alliance is piloting a new partnership with Playfly Sports to promote chocolate milk as the Official Protein Beverage of the Virginia High School League (VHSL), with the potential to expand to college sports. Using digital signage at VHSL events, videos shared via social media and the promotion of annual nutrition webinars, the over 195,000 participating student athletes and their supporters will learn of chocolate milk’s role in recovery and the 13 benefits of milk.

Through this program, chocolate milk will be at the forefront of young athletes’ and their coaches’ minds when choosing foods for health and wellness, driving sales in fluid milk. An alternative to sports drinks, chocolate milk is an easy way to rehydrate while naturally providing calcium, potassium, sodium and magnesium. Positioning chocolate milk as a tool for young athletes will encourage VHSL participants to choose milk over other beverage options at school and at home in order to improve performance.
Fermented Warm Grain Bowl

Prep Time: 10 minutes  Servings: 2 Salads
Total Time: 10 minutes  Easy

Ingredients:
1 (8.5 ounce) package mixed ancient grains
1 cup diced cucumber
1 cup sauerkraut with live probiotics
1 avocado, sliced
1/2 cup feta cheese crumbles

Creamy Kefir Vinaigrette:
1/2 cup plain kefir
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons honey
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions: Heat ancient grains per package directions, divide evenly into two serving bowls. Top with each grain bowl half the cucumber, fermented sauerkraut, avocado slices and feta cheese crumbles. Drizzle 2-3 tablespoons of creamy Kefir dressing and serve immediately. Creamy Kefir Vinaigrette: In a small mixing bowl, whisk together kefir and mayonnaise. Add in remaining ingredients. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Based off our in-house research, we know consumers are concerned with digestive health and looking for foods that provide a benefit to them. Using this information, we can develop targeted recipes that speak to consumer trends and demands. As part of a campaign to highlight fermented dairy foods and their health benefits, we created a Warm Grain Bowl with kefir, an excellent fermented dairy food that’s on a the rise in popularity, especially with health-conscious consumers.