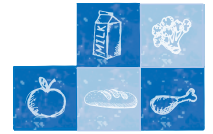


TRENDS



FOOD AND NUTRITION ISSUES LIKELY TO IMPACT THE DAIRY INDUSTRY IN THE NEXT 1 TO 3 YEARS

2017 TOP 10 NUTRITION AND HEALTH TRENDS

1. Dietary patterns and plant-based diets gain momentum.

Research continues to focus on dietary patterns versus individual nutrients as a marker for a healthy diet. This broader approach is being translated into application; for example, the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans endorses three dietary patterns—the Healthy U.S.-style pattern, the Healthy Vegetarian pattern and the Healthy Mediterranean pattern.

Within these patterns there is an emphasis on plant-based diets for a multitude of reasons, including health, the environment, economics and world hunger. Community health initiatives often promote plant-based eating patterns and restaurants now routinely offer plant-based entrees to meet the increased demand.

Plant-based eating patterns are often misunderstood to mean vegetarian or even vegan (no animal products whatsoever), when in fact dairy and moderate amounts of meat can be included. In fact, the dietary pattern with the most research to prove positive impact on health is the DASH diet where dairy products are a central component. Animal protein from meat, milk and cheese is often superior to plant protein for digestibility and nutritional quality.

Dairy Council of California continues to educate on how milk and dairy foods need to be incorporated into healthy dietary patterns—including plant-based patterns—for dairy's package of nutrients, affordability and convenience.

2. Diabetes incidence continues to escalate.

Diabetes is currently the seventh leading cause of death in the United States, with almost 10 percent of the population—21 million Americans—diagnosed with the disease. These trends are largely due to the increasing prevalence of obesity: 85 percent of those with type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese. If these trends continue, as many as one in three adults will have diabetes by 2050.

Following a healthy diet, getting regular physical activity and maintaining a normal body weight are recognized

as ways to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. Poor diet quality is associated with increased risk of type 2 diabetes even if someone is not obese. While there is no single food that can prevent diabetes, growing evidence suggests that dairy foods, particularly yogurt, are protective against type 2 diabetes. Whey protein is also getting attention for its positive effect on glycemic response—the spike in blood sugar after eating a meal or snack.

Dairy Council of CA encourages incorporating dairy products in the diet, managing weight and being physically active to reduce the risk of diabetes. Focus on diabetes prevention will continue as the incidence continues to escalate.

3. Reducing added sugars is a common public health strategy.

A growing body of evidence links sugar and refined carbohydrates to dental cavities, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other chronic illnesses. Foods high in added sugars—such as soft drinks, energy and sport drinks, sweetened teas, fruit drinks, cakes, cookies and pastries—are high in calories and low in nutrients.

Almost one-half of added sugars comes from sugar-sweetened drinks, and decreasing consumption is a public health priority for reducing obesity in the United States. Strategies to reduce sugar consumption include making healthy foods cheaper, establishing wellness policies, restricting the sale of unhealthy beverages and even taxing them. The good news for dairy is that beverages such as milk, water, unsweetened coffee and tea are often recommended as alternatives. However, flavored milk can get caught in the crossfire as an unnecessary source of calories and sugar, particularly when people forget that it provides the same nutrients as fat-free milk.

The revised Nutrition Facts panel, which will go into effect July 2018, will require disclosing the level of added sugars in products as a way to educate consumers. Consumers may benefit from recognizing that dairy foods contain natural sugar in the form of lactose. However, a focus on sugar-sweetened products like flavored milk and yogurt may negatively impact the dairy industry.

Dairy Council of CA will enhance efforts to educate about nutrient density—nutrients per calorie—to help people understand that although some dairy foods have added sugars, there is no other single food or beverage that provides the same irreplaceable package of nutrients as milk.

4. Sustainability is increasingly driving consumer food choices.

Consumers are more conscious of their health and the environment than ever before, making sustainability a strong driving force behind food selection. Millennials in particular are more often making food choices based on sustainability and animal care and are willing to spend more on some foods (e.g., grass-fed beef and pasture-raised chickens).

A plant-based diet is often seen as the most environmentally friendly diet. However, the health and sustainability of individuals, not just the environment, needs to be considered, and nutrient adequacy is more difficult to achieve on vegan diets. In studies comparing different types of diets, lacto-vegetarian diets (which include dairy) score the highest for feeding the most people per unit of land; ovo-lacto vegetarian diets (which include eggs and dairy) also score well.

Dairy Council of CA educates consumers about healthy diets that meet overall nutrient needs and health goals. Informational materials often cover some of the improvements the dairy industry is making to improve the sustainability of its production practices.

5. Food waste becomes a global concern.

From farm to fork, estimates of food waste range from 30 to 40 percent, an unfortunate situation given the amount of energy used to produce the food and the number of hungry and malnourished people worldwide. Efforts across the food chain have been implemented to reduce this amount. For example:

- Many industries, including the dairy industry, have demonstrated commitment to sustainable agricultural practices that minimize waste and reuse by-products.
- Plate waste studies in schools help identify what foods children are throwing away so that school foodservice directors can serve foods that are both nutritious and appealing.
- Retail stores and restaurants are making efforts to donate unused food to food banks.
- Efforts are underway to standardize “best by,” “sell by” and “use by” dates to avoid having perfectly good food thrown away prematurely—a common practice.

Other efforts include bills being passed to minimize waste, public health efforts aimed at educating consumers on food waste, and policy changes making it easier and more profitable for companies and farms to donate food. A recent study across 17 countries found that for every \$1 companies invest to reduce food loss and waste, they save \$14 in operating costs.

Dairy Council of CA is helping to reduce food waste by educating consumers about the meaning of food dates in order to minimize waste in homes. The dairy industry can also work to standardize date stamps on its products to help consumers know what is safe to consume.

6. Barriers to milk consumption are on the rise.

Children and families are faced with a multitude of reasons for not consuming milk, which was until recently the traditional drink served at meals. Many consumers, in particular Millennials, are looking for alternatives to milk such as soy, rice and almond beverages and are serving these alternatives to their children as well.

In schools, children may be discouraged from taking milk if they are not going to drink it, in order to reduce food waste. Often, schools serve fat-free or 1 percent milk, which is not appealing to children who like 2 percent or whole milk. Additionally, the temperature at which milk is held can be a barrier if children like their milk very cold.

Finally, families that rely on food pantries may not have access to fresh milk, further reducing consumption.

Educational efforts to help people achieve healthy diets that include milk need to be tailored to the unique needs of people living at all socioeconomic levels. Milk can be highlighted as an economical source of numerous nutrients in a convenient and portable package.

7. Down-aging of chronic disease is a top public health concern.

Chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease are appearing at younger ages. Research on childhood obesity shows risk factors are evident at a young age, and early intervention is critical.

Food choices of pregnant women and young children set the stage for their health many years later. More teens now have high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity than in the past. This means that health clinics in schools and in the community are not just in “wellness and prevention” mode, and they often need resources for disease intervention. As a result of this down-aging, more focus will be on establishing healthy diets and lifestyles at an early age, even before birth.

The irreplaceable nutrient package in milk and dairy foods is especially important for pregnant women and young children. Dairy Council of CA is expanding opportunities to educate children and parents to help them with actionable, lifelong behavior change strategies that will minimize risk of chronic disease.

8. Multi-level health interventions are the key to success in producing behavior change.

It is becoming clear that successful large-scale behavior change involves a multitude of touch points at work and school, in the home, at the store, at the doctor's office and through the smartphone to truly impact consumer choices. Often this broad-based strategy is labeled Policy, Systems and Environmental Change (PSE) and is a way of modifying the environment to make healthy choices practical and available to everyone in a community. Education cannot be forgotten as a key strategy in motivating consumers and giving them the decision-making tools critical to long-term healthy habits.

A PSE example that is being used in schools to help children improve their nutritional health involves a multi-level approach of classroom instruction using relevant and interactive educational tactics, school wellness policies, school-based health clinics, smarter lunchrooms, parent education pieces and sometimes even school food banks.

Dairy Council of CA will have numerous partnership opportunities with health professionals, community leaders, government, education organizations and businesses to create sustainable change for lifelong healthy eating habits and food availability that include milk and dairy products.

9. Technology enables personalized messages.

Across many aspects of our lives, from marketing to education, personalized messages are seen as effective and are quickly becoming the norm. Delivery of content that is unique and relevant to individuals, as well as connection of like-minded consumers around the world, is enabled by technology. Mobile apps are common among children, adolescents and adults alike and are an easy and convenient way to reach these groups.

In the education arena, educators have an opportunity to utilize and combine strategies such as experiential learning and storytelling, which are increasingly delivered through technology. Tailoring materials to be relevant and timely to students and tapping into their preferred methods of learning make educational materials more effective.

Dairy Council of CA is a leader in harnessing technology for educational goals. Dairy Council of CA website, HealthyEating.org, provides an effective and actionable means to reach both children and adults with behavior-change-based nutrition education.

10. Consumers turn to anecdotes and emotions for nutrition information.

In this age of information overload, people are gravitating toward information that supports their notions of health and nutrition. Good stories compel change, which means that powerful blogs are very believable, and personal stories of authentic experiences often win over credible science. Technology and online social networks have made it easier for people to validate their values and beliefs with those of others (who may be on the other side of the world).

Distrust of the government, the food industry and big institutions is also fueling the movement of consumers forging their own nutritional paths. They often self-diagnose conditions and adopt dietary patterns to improve their health without seeking the care of health professionals. These diets can be unbalanced and ultimately lead to nutritional deficiencies. As a result, delivering credible, sound nutrition and health advice that is compelling to consumers can be a challenge.

Dairy Council of CA often appeals first to the emotional or personal issues that are driving consumers and then empowers them with pertinent science-based information. Transparency and open communication are essential to build trust and respect.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Produced twice annually by Dairy Council of California, the TRENDS newsletter updates industry leaders on emerging nutrition issues likely to have a positive or negative effect upon the dairy industry. The trends tracking system, monitored by a team of Dairy Council of California staff, is designed to identify issues early and track their development through multiple communication channels. Analysis is done semiannually on the issues. For more information or to receive a hard copy of the TRENDS newsletter, please contact Kendall House at KHouse@DairyCouncilofCA.org.



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