

SNAP Healthy Fluid Milk Incentive Program Expands to Additional 575 Stores in 16 States with Award to Auburn Hunger Solutions Institute

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29, 2023—The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today released grant-approval to significantly expand the Healthy Fluid Milk Incentives Projects (HFMI)—a program established in the 2018 Farm Bill and one of the Department’s key nutrition incentive programs for participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

HFMI projects provide SNAP beneficiaries with a dollar-for-dollar match when they purchase healthy fluid milk options. Today’s USDA award announcement utilizes \$4 million in FY2023 congressional appropriations to Auburn University’s Hunger Solutions Institute (HSI) to bring the program to an additional 575 retail outlets in 16 states, including locations in rural communities, counties with persistently high poverty rates, low-income and low access census tracts, and Tribal Nations and surrounding tribal communities. Following implementation of this award, HFMI projects will operate in 700 stores in 19 states with additional locations coming online by early 2024.



The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), led by President and CEO Michael Dykes, D.V.M., lauded the expansion of the HFMI program, noting the important role dairy incentives play in improving health outcomes for Americans experiencing [increasing levels of food and nutrition insecurity](#) in the United States. IDFA led the charge to create HFMI in the 2018 Farm Bill and has continued to closely collaborate with Congress and USDA to expand the program to more communities across the country. IDFA is a major proponent of incentivizing SNAP participants to purchase healthy dairy options to increase access to affordable, nutritious food and beverage options for food and nutrition insecure Americans.

“Expanding the SNAP Healthy Fluid Milk Incentives Projects means greater access to affordable, nutritious dairy products for the most vulnerable Americans,” said Dykes. “Consuming milk, along with its 13 essential nutrients, is linked to healthy immune function, hydration, cognition, mental health, bone health, and lower risk for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. During this time of chronic food insecurity, it’s critical we find ways to stretch the SNAP dollar further in support of the purchase of nutrient-dense foods.”

“IDFA congratulates Auburn’s Hunger Solutions Institute and its retail partners including Meijer on this grant, particularly their initiative to operationalize electronic milk-purchase incentives. HSI’s expertise with other SNAP nutrition incentives and hands-on approach is proving beneficial to finding the best ways for the SNAP program to incentivize the purchase of nutritious dairy products,” said Dykes. “We commit to support HSI’s work to make HFMI projects successful in 2024.”

Midwest retailer Meijer is the only retailer in its six-state footprint of Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, and Wisconsin that Auburn is partnering with on the HFMI project. Meijer applied for the grant in an effort to provide its SNAP customers with an incentive for purchasing dairy products. This is in addition to the other incentives Meijer is offering its SNAP customers, which include 10 percent off produce and free home delivery. Details on the retailer’s related promotional offer will be shared in the coming weeks.

“As a company committed to enriching lives in the communities we serve, providing our customers with healthy grocery options is at the heart of what we do,” said Becky Bronkema, Director of Merchandising for Dairy/Frozen at Meijer. “We are excited to partner on this important project during the holiday season to help families get easier access to milk, which offers so much nutritional value.”

The latest federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans report showed that more than 90% of Americans do not consume enough dairy products to meet daily nutrition requirements, impeding positive health outcomes for Americans of all ages. Studies have shown that incentive programs, like HFMI, increase purchase and consumption of the incentivized food.

“Dairy foods makers are committed to playing a proactive role in mitigating underconsumption, especially for our nation’s most vulnerable and underserved individuals. We believe a stronger focus on nutrition incentives like those provided through HFMI, alongside proper education and outreach, will improve access to affordable, nutritious dairy foods like milk, yogurt, and cheese.”

IDFA is asking Congress to include provisions in the next Farm Bill that would expand the existing HFMI program to include all milk varieties as well as cheese and yogurt. The organization supports the Dairy Nutrition

Incentive Program Act of 2023, bipartisan legislation ([S. 1474/H.R. 5099](#)) that would implement early HFMI learnings to improve the effectiveness of incentives to increase SNAP participants' consumption of healthy dairy products, stretch participants SNAP dollars and expand access to dairy incentives to additional areas of the country that are in most need.

To learn more about the health benefits of milk, cheese and yogurt, visit www.idfa.org/dairynourishes.

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), Washington, D.C., represents the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industry, which supports more than 3.2 million jobs that generate \$49 billion in direct wages and \$794 billion in overall economic impact. IDFA's diverse membership ranges from multinational organizations to single-plant companies, from dairy companies and cooperatives to food retailers and suppliers, all on the cutting edge of innovation and sustainable business practices. Together, they represent most of the milk, cheese, ice cream, yogurt and cultured products, and dairy ingredients produced and marketed in the United States and sold throughout the world. Delicious, safe and nutritious, dairy foods offer unparalleled health and consumer benefits to people of all ages.

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<https://newsroom.meijer.com/2023-11-29-SNAP-Healthy-Fluid-Milk-Incentive-Program-Expands-to-Additional-575-Stores-in-16-States-with-Award-to-Auburn-Hunger-Solutions-Institute>