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A Million Bottles of Milk

MAITLAND – The Florida Dairy Farmers are liking all of those milk mustaches they're seeing at Wendy's.

The quick-service restaurant's decision to include milk as a substitute for soda on Kids' Meals has so far been overwhelmingly successful. Families now can order eight-ounce, single-serve plastic containers of reduced fat (2 percent) white or lowfat (1 percent) chocolate milk.

The chain also is offering 4-ounce mandarin orange cups as a substitute for French fries. One month after nationally introducing these new options, Wendy's announced that weekly milk sales have exceeded 1 million units for the first time. Sales of white milk in traditional paper cartons previously averaged around 65,000 units. Flavored milk was not available.

Wendy's is the first quick-service restaurant chain to feature the American Dairy Association's 3-A-Day logo on its milk labels, encouraging people to consume three daily servings of milk, cheese or yogurt. Wendy's has 6,535 restaurants in North America and international markets.

The new menu options are in line with recent dairy research. A year-long study involving more than 100,000 elementary and secondary school kids found that they consumed more refreshing milk when it was offered cold in different flavors and fun, grab-and-go containers.

According to government recommendations, children ages 4-8 need 800 milligrams of calcium a day or the equivalent of three daily servings of milk, cheese or yogurt. The National Dairy Council encourages parents to choose milk when ordering meals for their kids since milk delivers nine essential nutrients, including about a third of their daily calcium needs.

"More than ever, parents are looking for additional nutritious choices for their children. It's clear our new Kids' Meal options are something that families like and appreciate," said Tom Mueller, president, Wendy's North America. "The initial response has been tremendous."