

DAIRY MATTERS



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FDF visits libraries to give youngsters a taste of farm life

With the help of libraries across the state, Florida Dairy Farmers is bringing the farm to town for hundreds of children through a new reading program. The kids hear a story about milk, watch an animated video with singing and dancing cows, pet a calf and enjoy a glass of chocolate milk. The goals of the program are to show and tell boys and girls about the importance of dairy farming and the benefits of nutrient-rich milk.



Dairy farmer Kara Watkins shares a story about milk and farming with children at the Sebring Public Library.

The program kicked off on July 8 at the Sebring Public Library where more than 60 children listened while Highlands County dairy farmer Kara Watkins read *Allison Investigates: Does Chocolate Milk Come from Brown Cows?*

The children laughed at FDF's animated video, *SunnyBell & the Florida Dairy "Moo"ical*, and enjoyed petting a calf that Watkins brought from her farm.

Sebring Library Assistant Deb Frisco said, "Kara was delightful and really connected with the kids for a very special and memorable experience! We hope Florida Dairy Farmers will continue

offering this wonderful program."

Lafayette County Library in Mayo was the second stop on the tour. Lindsay O'Steen, daughter of Mayo dairy farmer Riley O'Steen, read *Allison Investigates* to about 120 children. Afterward, the kids were excited to bottle-feed two baby calves and to ask a number of interesting – and sometimes humorous – questions about cows and life on the farm.

In addition, Dana Langford, education coordinator for Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, brought a cow-milking simulator

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Now Available! Enjoy our fresh Floridamilk.com

Florida Dairy Farmers' website, www.floridamilk.com, has a fresh new look.

Technology changes quickly on the World Wide Web, and Florida Dairy Farmers is changing with it by redesigning our website. The previous revision came in early 2009, and FDF wants to make sure the site remains fresh and interesting for consumers.

Website statistics show that our "Dairy Farming" page has had the highest traffic of all the pages on our site for the past two years. That means people are visiting our site for more information about dairy farming practices and you, our Florida dairy farmers.



Upfront
Aaron Wockenfuss

To make the most of those numbers and further promote dairy farming in Florida, our new website has a cleaner look and feel and a theme based more on agriculture. For instance, page backgrounds feature photos taken on many of your farms.

Consumers can still browse our dairy farming content to learn about how Florida dairy farmers are good stewards of the land and how dairy farming is an around-the-clock operation. In addition, visitors can hear more from farmers directly. As FDF staffers make more and more visits to your farms, our new podcast section will feature videos of Florida dairy farmers talking about farming practices and the life of

Upfront continued on back page



Karen and Jerry Dakin, winners of a nationwide contest, welcome NFL player Earnest Graham to their Myakka City farm.

Bucs' Earnest Graham visits Dakin Dairy

Dakin Dairy Farms hosted a visit from Tampa Bay Buccaneer running back Earnest Graham as the prize for winning a nationwide contest among dairies showing support of their local NFL team.

Graham, along with 25 students from R. Dan Nolan Middle School in Bradenton, toured the Myakka City farm in May. Dakin Dairy won Dairy Management Inc.'s "Show Your Pride" contest, where dairy farmers competed in a photo contest.

During his tour, Graham spoke to the students about the Fuel Up to Play 60

partnership between dairy farmers and the NFL, to which America's dairy farmers have committed \$250 million over five years to combat childhood obesity. Graham also led the students in drills and stretches, while speaking to them about the importance of healthy eating and exercise.

On the tour, Graham and the students bottle-fed calves and saw how milk is produced. Afterward, Graham and farm owners Jerry and Karen Dakin fielded questions from the students, who were treated to milk bottled on the farm.



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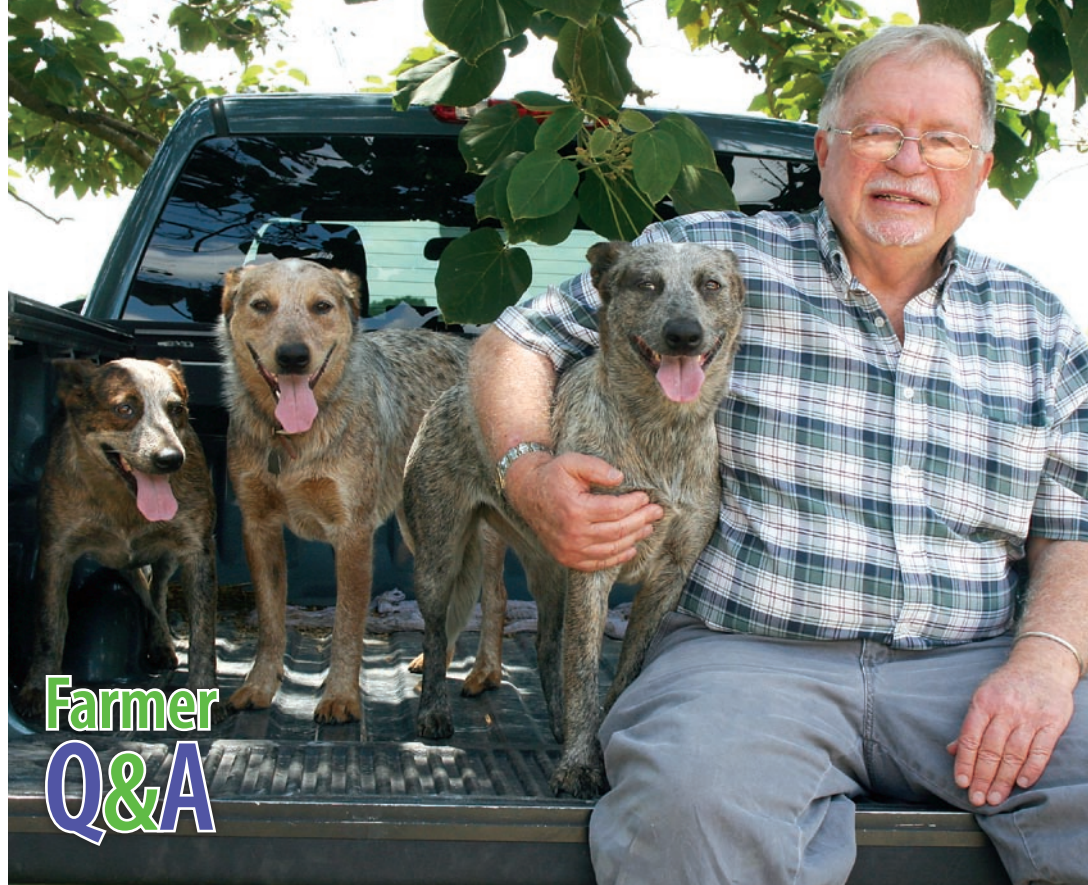
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Questions, comments: Contact Mick Lochridge at 407-478-5482 or mickl@floridamilk.com



Don Bennink: Industry leader and mentor to international dairy students

Don Bennink, 69, is managing partner of North Florida Holsteins, a 2,400-acre dairy and beef operation in Bell. Before he moved his dairy herd from western New York to Gilchrist County in 1980, Bennink juggled two careers: lawyer and dairyman. It was after a trip to Florida on a legal case that he decided to move to the Sunshine State and give his full attention to farming. That proved to be

the right call for both Bennink and the dairy business. Over the years, Bennink has established himself as an industry leader – not only in Florida and across the country but also around the world – for his expertise on efficient farming techniques and livestock genetics. He was out in front with tunnel ventilation in barns to improve production and herd health. Bennink also is known for his intern program

that invites international participants interested in dairy farm management to work and learn on his farm for a year.

Bennink was named the World Dairy Expo Dairyman of the Year for 2010 and received the International Dairy Foods Association's Innovative Dairy Farmer of the Year award in 2005. He also has received the University of Florida School of Veterinary Medicine Superior

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for the crowd to try.

Library operations manager Cheryl Pulliam said, "The program was a huge hit with parents and kids alike! You could tell by the questions the kids were asking the dairy farmer that they were fascinated by the whole process. It's always great when the kids are having so much fun; they forget they're learning."

For more information about this program, contact **Alayna Rivera** at 407-647-8899, x1110 or alaynar@floridamilk.com.



Dairy farmer Riley O'Steen teaches youngsters at the Mayo library about life on a farm.



Bennink and his Australian cattle dogs, or blue heelers: Posey, Brown and Daisy (from left). He walks through a tunnel-ventilation barn (above).

Service Award and an Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Award of Distinction. Bennink joined the Florida Dairy Farmers board in the early 1980s and served as board president from 1993-1995. He also was a representative to the United Dairy Industry Association. His dairy industry affiliations include Southeast Milk Inc., where he has served as director, chairman of the Trucking Committee and member of the Executive Committee; the Holstein Association; and the American Dairy Science Association. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., and a law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in Cleveland, Ohio. He and wife Marianne have daughter Patty and son Dan.

Today, North Florida Holsteins is home to a total herd of 9,200 that includes 4,500 milking cows, along with beef cattle and steers. *Dairy Matters* recently visited North Florida Holsteins.

Dairy Matters: *What prompted your interest in genetics and breeding Holsteins?*

Don Bennink: I have always appreciated and enjoyed being around high-quality livestock. The science and economics of developing the most profitable cow to fit a particular system trips my trigger. Having many close friends with a similar

interest only whets my appetite more.

DM: *What steps have you taken to improve cow comfort?*

DB: Moving into a hot, humid climate with a species of livestock originating in Northern Europe rapidly showed that everything economically possible needed to be done to limit the undesirable. Providing quality feed, comfortable housing,

adequate cooling, proper milking and minimal stress are very challenging, but very rewarding.

DM: *What do you find rewarding from the foreign-intern program?*

DB: Seeing the change in the trainees from when they begin the program until they finish is very satisfying. But the big exhilaration for me is visiting them after they return to their home. We take great pride in the fact that the majority become real leaders in the industry within a few years of returning. The influence this group of people has had is unbelievable and amazes everyone who witnesses their progress. We host about eight interns at any one time, and they stay for one year. Most have four-year degrees or veterinary degrees when they come. We've had more than 200 since the program started in 1991. They have been from every continent.

DM: *What are the biggest challenges today of being a dairy farmer in Florida?*

DB: Having people where dairy farms are located realize the contribution the businesses make to the region. That is underemphasized. Getting local support to accommodate dairy farms and farmers is not always easy. This includes the school systems, sometimes law enforcement, county commissions and other officials and organizations.

DM: *What do you see in the future for*

dairy farmers?

DB: I think there is a good future for the "hands on" talented dairy farmer. This is the one who is out there day to day staying in touch with what is going on, but goes in the office and evaluates the moves that will add to profitability.

DM: *What is the most satisfying thing about being a dairy farmer?*

DB: Putting together a team of people who make the biological adapt to the mechanical in a way that is sound economically. That is an achievement to be proud of.

DM: *What would you like the non-farming public to understand about the dairy industry?*

DB: Non-farm people that I run into, whether it be on airplanes or those who visit the farm, are unbelievably naïve about agriculture. The soap-opera presentation of cable news is very destructive. They oversimplify what is involved in feeding our and the world's population. People don't realize how hard farmers, particularly dairy farmers, work.

DM: *Why did you decide to become a dairy farmer?*

DB: Although I had no family resources, the desire to work with fine cattle and agriculture in general made all the hard work and lack of funding nothing but steep hills to climb.

DM: *When you are not working, what do you do in your spare time?*

DB: I have a fishing hole out back that sees me for an hour or two a week. Developing the fish population is as much fun as the fishing. Spending time on horseback is a desire as we get a couple of young geldings broken. Keeping up with world and national affairs largely by reading the *Wall Street Journal* daily is a part of my psyche. Discussing or debating these topics with informed individuals intrigues me.

DM: *If you were not a dairy farmer, what would you be?*

DB: I would probably still be a farmer, but with another species of livestock like beef or pork. Growing up in the Northeast in a dairy farming area pulled me toward dairying. It might be different if raised elsewhere.

Ron St. John named Swisher Sweets Florida Farmer of the Year

Ron St. John, who owns three dairy farms in Florida and two in Georgia, was selected as the 2011 Florida winner of the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Florida Farmer of the Year award. He joins eight other state winners as finalists for the Southeastern Farmer of the Year.

St. John owns Alliance and Piedmont dairies in Trenton and Southpoint in Chiefland. He also owns two dairies – Barrington and High-brighton – near Montezuma, Ga. He serves on Southeast Milk's executive committee, board of directors and quality committee.

Since moving from New York to Florida in 1986, he has "blazed a trail of innovation and expansion in dairy farming," says his

award announcement.

Last year he farmed more than 11,800 acres, and he has about 17,000 milk cows. Confinement cows produced about 20,500 pounds of milk per cow per year, while cows in his grazing dairies produced about 14,000 pounds of milk per year. After evaluating costs and returns of both confinement and grazing dairies, he says grazing dairies produce greater returns on investment. Labor costs are especially lower for grazing dairies.

Since its inception in 1990, the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year Award has evolved into the most prestigious honor in the Southeast and nation with 167 outstanding agribusiness lead-

ers being honored for their "excellence in agriculture," says Chip Blalock, the exposition's executive director.

The Southeastern Farmer of the Year will be announced Oct. 18 at the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition in Moultrie, Ga. Each state winner receives \$2,500 and an all-expense paid trip to the Expo, along with various other prizes. The overall Southeastern winner receives \$15,000 and various other prizes from the sponsors. Florida has had six overall winners, including dairyman Red Larson of Okeechobee in 2005. Dairy producer Wayne Wiggins of Plant City won the state award in 1992.



St. John

FDF wraps up 2010-2011 High School Sports Awards season

With the final ballots counted, the Florida Dairy Farmers High School Sports Awards program announced the remaining winners for the 2010-2011 school year. The program's 19th season had its share of talent with a total of 34 winners, including six scholar athletes.

Among the recipients were



Mr. and Miss Basketball. Winter Park High School's Austin Rivers was named the 2011 Florida Dairy Farmers Mr. Basketball and was presented with his award by Polk County dairy farmer Freda Carey. The son of NBA Boston Celtics coach Doc Rivers, he averaged 28.6 points per game in the 2010-11 season. He finished his career with 2,926 points, second on the all-time Orlando area list, and was named the 2011 McDonald's, Naismith and Parade National Player-of-the-Year and was a member of

Dairy farmer Bob Rydzewski stands with Miss Basketball Danielle McCray (left); dairy farmer Freda Carey presents the Mr. Basketball award to Austin Rivers (right).



the USA Junior National Select team. He will attend Duke University this fall.

Lake Worth Trinity Christian Academy's Danielle McCray was named the 2011 Florida Dairy Farmers Miss Basketball and was presented her award by Okeechobee dairy farmer Bob Rydzewski. McCray, a senior forward, averaged 20.8 points per game while leading her team to a 23-5 record and a Class 1A state runner-up finish. She was named the *Palm Beach Post's* small school player-of-the-year and was a McDonald's All-America nominee. She also set school records for career points (2,531), rebounds (1,633) and blocks (602). She has signed a letter of intent to attend the University of Mississippi.

Both recipients were very excited to be recognized in front



of their peers by Florida Dairy Farmers. Each player's school assembly also featured a milk toast, emphasizing to young people the importance of keeping dairy products a primary part of their diet and overall nutrition plan.

CARES honors Larson's Lafayette Dairy

Woody Larson's Lafayette Dairy received a CARES award for efforts to protect and conserve natural resources in the Suwannee River basin. The dairy, located near Mayo, was honored for the work it does with the Suwannee River Partnership to protect and save water through such measures as a nutrient-waste management plan, a waste-management system and record-keeping, says Darrell Smith, with the office of Agriculture Water Policy of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Suwannee River Partnership. Founded in 2001 by the Florida Farm Bureau, CARES (the County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship) has recognized more than 450 farmers statewide for using Best Management Practices. An estimated 750-800 people attended the June dinner and program at the UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center near Live Oak.



CARES award presentation: (from left) Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, dairy owner Woody Larson, farm manager Ashley Bailey, Farm Bureau President John Hoblick.

FDF promotes Lactaid at Hispanic expo

Florida Dairy Farmers made good use of Hispanic expo La Feria de La Familia in Fort Myers to educate hundreds of attendees about lactose-free milk. Sponsored by Telemundo, the June event helped Hispanic families gather information on issues relevant to their lifestyles, including businesses, events and job opportunities. FDF staffers provided product to sample, and children were given fun books with activities that teach them about the importance of dairy, and visitors won milk-promotional items by spinning a prize wheel. About 200 families signed up to receive FDF's monthly consumer e-newsletter.



Cheesy Stuffed Potato (Recipe on front of card)

Nutritional Facts

Calories: 460
 Fat: 12g
 Saturated Fat: 7g
 Cholesterol: 37mg
 Sodium: 383mg
 Calcium: 50% Daily Value
 Protein: 24g
 Carbohydrates: 93g





Prize-winning student buys new set of wheels

Paige Murrill, a second-grader at Apollo Elementary School in Brevard County, shows off the new bike and helmet (above) she bought with prize winnings from the statewide Fuel Up to Play 60 SNAP, TACKLE, CRUNCH Breakfast Bowl Contest, which invited students to create a breakfast cereal concept and design. Paige's "Health Rocks Cereal" was the winner for the K-2nd grade category.



Speakers, sponsors enhance summer board meeting

The 2011 summer board meeting of Florida Dairy Farmers featured guest speakers on topics ranging from flavored milk in schools to animal activists. The four speakers at the June event in Sarasota were Doug Adams, Prime Consulting Group (school environment and flavored milk); Betty Wolanyk, Ag Literacy Works (animal activism); Jill Hoover, USDA, (dairy promotion); and Susan Mitchell, dietitian and author, (the positive message of dairy). Jack Youngblood, former NFL and Gator football star, was the dinner speaker.

In addition, an Industry Leader Discussion was held with a three-member panel made up of Ryan Anglin, chair of the National Dairy Promotion & Research Board; Neil Hoff, 1st vice chairman of the United Dairy Industry Association and chairman of the Supplemental Funding Committee for Dairy Management Inc.; and Okeechobee dairyman John Larson, FDF's representative on the DMI board.

This year's meeting also offered sponsorships to help pay for the 2-day meeting. The sponsors were:

Gold Level

Cabot Creamery Cooperative
Pfizer Animal Health
Prince Agri Products Inc.

Silver Level

Agricon Equipment Co.
Alta Genetics Inc.
Commodity Specialists Co.
The Scoular Co.
Vi-COR
Walpole Inc.

Bronze Level

Syfrett Feed Co.

Consultant Doug Adams reports findings on flavored milk in Florida schools



Regional meetings focus on 'Telling Your Story'

"Telling Your Story" was the theme for Florida Dairy Farmers' two regional producer meetings held in May. Those who attended the dinner meetings in Okeechobee and Lafayette counties heard fellow farmers discuss how they are spreading the good word about dairy in Florida. They also watched a year-in-review video that showcased FDF's efforts to enlist others to carry the message to non-farming groups. At the end of the meetings, farmers were given "Telling Your Story" toolkits that contained information and advice on how they can effectively communicate about their dairy.



Cheesy Stuffed Potato

Makes 1 serving • Prep Time: 10 min • Cook Time: 15 min

1 large potato, baked
½ cup low fat plain yogurt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 cup steamed vegetables, such as broccoli and red bell pepper, coarsely chopped
¼ cup sharp Cheddar cheese, grated



Preheat oven to 425° F.

Slice baked potato lengthwise. Carefully scoop out potato, leaving about ¼" of pulp inside the shell. Mash the potato in a medium mixing bowl.

Mix in the yogurt, black pepper, and cooked vegetables. Place potato shells on baking sheet. Spoon mixture back into potato shells.

Top with Cheddar cheese. Bake for 10 - 15 minutes.

(Nutrition information on back of card)

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

FDF sponsors Gator Women's Football Clinic

Florida Dairy Farmers annually sponsors the Gator Women's Football Clinic in Gainesville. More than 515 women attended this year's June 4 event, sampling chocolate milk, posing for milk mustache photos and hearing from Gator Sports Nutritionist and Registered Dietitian Chelsea Zenner about how UF athletes use chocolate milk as a recovery drink to refuel their bodies after exercise. To see a video of Zenner's presentation: <http://bit.ly/oREI0J>



39 schools receive Fuel Up to Play 60 funds

The Dairy Council of Florida has awarded nearly \$100,000 to 39 schools statewide to support Fuel Up to Play 60, a national in-school health and wellness program. Each school received up to \$3,000 to increase awareness of and access to nutrient-rich foods including low-fat and fat-free dairy foods and provide greater opportunities for students to achieve 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Fuel Up to Play 60 is a program of the National Dairy Council and the National Football League in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture.



“These are standout schools in our Fuel Up to Play 60 program, succeeding with their unique and innovative approaches to get kids excited about eating healthy and being active,” said Jennifer Sills, MPH, RD, LD/N, SNS, director of Dairy Health and Wellness for the Dairy Council of Florida. The following schools were selected for the summer 2011 funding period:

Brevard County

- Apollo Elementary
- DeLaura Middle
- Imperial Estates Elementary
- Melbourne Senior High
- Ocean Breeze Elementary
- Quest Elementary
- Theodore Roosevelt Elementary

Broward County

- Everglades Elementary
- Hawkes Bluff Elementary
- Indian Ridge Middle
- J.P. Taravella High
- Margate Elementary
- Nova Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary
- Nova Middle
- Tradewinds Elementary

Clay County

- McRae Elementary

Collier County

- Mike Davis Elementary

Duval County

- Chet's Creek Elementary

Flagler County

- Bunnell Elementary

Florida Charter Schools

- Samsula Academy (K-5)

Highlands County

- Avon Park Middle

Leon County

- Lillian Ruediger Elementary
- Sabal Palm Elementary

Manatee County

- R. Dan Nolan Middle
- Tara Elementary

Miami-Dade County

- Barbara Hawkins Elementary

- Hiialeah Gardens Middle

- Lamar Louise Curry Middle

Orange County

- Avalon Middle
- Edgewater High
- Hillcrest Elementary
- Timber Creek High

Pasco County

- Veterans Elementary

Pinellas County

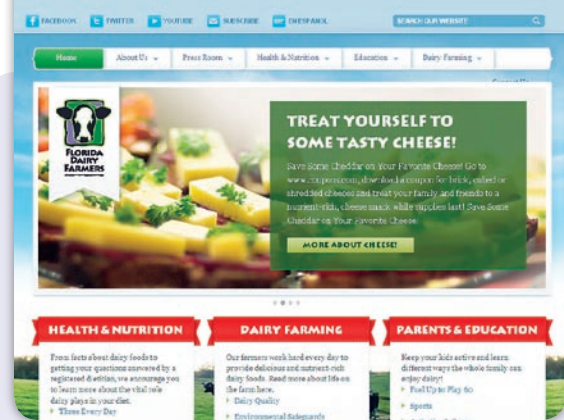
- Bay Point Middle
- Fitzgerald Middle
- San Jose Elementary

St. Lucie County

- Manatee K-8
- Mariposa Elementary

Volusia County

- Ormond Beach Middle



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a dairy farmer, sharing their passion directly with our mostly non-farmer website visitors.

To help consumers stay connected to FDF and Florida agriculture, we also have integrated social media into our new site. Consumers can find all of our social media channels in one place. Web visitors also can now join our Facebook fan base directly from our website and see previews of our posts and what is going on in the world of dairy. Another feature of our new site is the ability to sign up for any of our five electronic newsletters. Both features are yet another way for FDF to stay connected with the consumers who come to our site periodically.

Equally important on the site is the Dairy Council of Florida's information regarding dairy foods. For families and consumers, the new site features a more robust "Dairy Foods" section containing information on the importance of including dairy in your diet, dairy recipes and dairy food facts. There is also a section for children with downloadable coloring pages, resource kits and games. For health professionals, the new site features downloadable patient education tools and information on how to become involved in their community with the Fuel Up to Play 60 program.

From sports to media, Florida Dairy Farmers has its bases covered. Visit the site today and get connected!

www.floridamilk.com

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