



NATIONAL DAIRY COUNCIL®

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Kathryn McMurry, M.S., R.D.
Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Department of Health and Human Services
Room 738-G
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Ms. McMurry:

In response to the federal register notice of April 26, 2004, the National Dairy Council is pleased to submit the following comments to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. Since the IOM report on potassium was released earlier this year recommending an increased AI of 4700 mg, experts have focused on ways to ameliorate the potassium inadequacy in the American population.¹ Based on CSFII and NHANES data, fluid milk is the number one source of potassium in the U.S. diet, providing 10.8 percent of national intake, nearly equal to the amount provided by all fruits and fruit juices (11.5 percent).^{2,3} On a food-to-food comparison, milk provides more potassium to the diet than foods with a higher potassium content, such as bananas (2.4 percent) or citrus juices (3.9 percent).

Overall, milk is a good source of potassium, providing 11 percent of the DV per serving, and from a food supply perspective, dairy products provide 16-17 percent of the potassium in the U.S. diet. Each 8 oz serving of milk provides about 350-400 mg of potassium.⁴ As milk is the leading individual food source for this nutrient, recommending an additional serving of dairy would appear to be a feasible solution to help Americans meet potassium needs, especially for groups with low intakes.

Three to four servings of milk provide 1050-1600 mg of potassium, up to a third of the potassium recommendation. In addition, 3-4 servings of milk provide 900-1200 mg calcium, 7.5-10 micrograms vitamin D, and seven other essential nutrients critical to

¹ Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board, Dietary Reference Intakes for Water, Potassium, Sodium, Chloride, and Sulfate. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; 2004.

² U.S. Department of Agriculture. 1998. 1994-96 Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals and 1994-96 Diet and Health Knowledge Survey. CD-ROM.

³ National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), 1999-2000. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm>

⁴ Duyff RL, *American Dietetic Association: Complete Food and Nutrition Guide*, 2002.

Americans' diets.⁵ Dairy is one of the leading food sources of a number of nutrients, including calcium and vitamin D (See attached chart for detail).

Potassium helps regulate blood pressure, an important benefit for the one in five Americans living with high blood pressure.^{6,7} It is also a critical nutrient for normal muscle contractions and transmission of nerve impulses. Potassium deficiency can result in cardiac arrhythmias, weakness and glucose intolerance, as well as increased blood pressure, increased salt sensitivity, increased bone turnover and increased risk of kidney stones. In addition, potassium inadequacy may increase risk of cardiovascular disease, particularly stroke.

The IOM report found that most American women 31 to 50 years old are getting less than half of the recommended amount of potassium, and men's intake is only slightly higher. African Americans in the United States generally have a lower potassium intake than non-Hispanic whites, and because they are more likely to have elevated blood pressure, increased potassium intake may have particularly significant benefits for them.¹

Dairy foods are an important part of the potassium solution and a logical way to help Americans meet their potassium needs.

For more than 85 years National Dairy Council has worked to advance the state of scientific knowledge on the role and value of dairy foods in promoting and enhancing human nutrition and health. We look forward to playing an active role in the public process, and to assisting you in any way possible to achieve results that will benefit the health and well-being of all Americans.

Sincerely,



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⁵ USDA Nutrient Content of the U.S. Food Supply, 1909-99.

⁶ American Heart Association Web site, High Blood Pressure Statistics. Accessed May 12, 2004.
<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2139>

⁷ Insel P, Turner RE, Ross D, eds. Nutrition, 2002 Update. Jones and Bartlett Publishers; Boston. 2002.

Dairy's Nutrient Package

Important Nutrients in Dairy	% Daily Value of Nutrients in Milk (8 ounces) ¹	Dairy's Contribution to the Food Supply (per capita) ²
Calcium	30%	73%
Phosphorus	20%	34%
Vitamin D	25%	N/A
Riboflavin	23%	27%
Protein	16%	20%
Vitamin B ₁₂	13%	22%
Potassium	11%	16-17%
Vitamin A	10%	16%
Niacin	10%	1.3%
Magnesium	7%	17%

¹ Duyff RL, *American Dietetic Association: Complete Food and Nutrition Guide*, 2002.

² USDA Nutrient Content of the U.S. Food Supply, 1909-99.