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The Institute of Medicine Report and Dairy Products

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report intends that federally reimbursable school nutrition programs be the primary source of foods and beverages sold at school. They also intend that nutrition standards be established for foods and beverages offered **outside** the federally reimbursable school nutrition programs. Their recent report focuses solely on standards for individual foods and beverages offered in competition to federal meal programs.

The nutrient standards of federally reimbursable school nutrition programs are not the same as those recommended for competitive foods in the IOM report. However, the two overlap, and therefore the IOM report does address those NSLP/SBP items in their recommendations when competitive foods are offered in schools. These foods must meet nutrient standards defined in the report with some allowances for fat and calories. Changes to the current school meal patterns are being studied with recommendations and comment period expected late 2007 or early 2008.

IOM recommends limiting opportunities for competitive foods during the school day. If competitive foods are available to students, they should consist of nutritious fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nonfat or low-fat milk and dairy products, as consistent with the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA). Foods and beverages sold **outside** the federal meal programs are organized into two tiers, one for all students and one for high school students after school. However, these standards could be interpreted and applied to the federally reimbursable meal programs by some school nutrition professionals. Therefore, the following implications are discussed relating to both.

Individual Product Guidelines

Milk – per portion as packaged

- Only low fat (1%) and non fat
- Flavored milk with no more than 22 grams of total sugars per 8 ounce serving.
- Chocolate milk exempted from the caffeine restriction.
- Calories \leq 200 per portion as packaged.
- No more than 35% of total calories from fat and 10% from saturated fat
- Sodium content of 200 mg or less
- No trans fat

Fat and calorie standards limit the ability to offer larger than 8 oz. portions of milk in a la carte and vending. The ability to offer flavored milks is limited as most exceed 22 grams of sugar. The large majority (69% according to SNA's trendSETS) of milk served in schools is flavored. Product availability and palatability is suspected to be lower at this level of sugar. Operators could be forced to offer only unflavored milk on the meal line and a la carte which has shown to have a detrimental affect on student participation, especially at the secondary levels.

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Yogurt – per portion as packaged

- \leq 30 grams total sugar per 8 ounce
- Calories \leq 200 per portion as packaged.
- No more than 35% of total calories from fat and 10% from saturated fat
- Sodium content of 200 mg or less
- No trans fat

Dannon's 4 oz. Danimals product has 90 calories, 55 mg sodium, and 13 g sugar and meets the recommendations. General Mills Yoplait Trix product has 120 calories 55 mg sodium, and 17 g of sugar. Upstate Farms 4 oz. product has 100 calories, 75 mg sodium, and 20 g sugar. These products could not be served under the IOM recommendations. Product availability will be limited with only one major product for meal lines. Secondary schools will have difficulty offering larger portions (6 or 8 oz) for a la carte or vending. Palatability is lower at this sugar level.

Cheese – per portion as packaged

- Only low fat (1%) and non fat
- Calories \leq 200 per portion as packaged. However, for a la carte entrée items, the 200 calorie limit does not apply. They cannot exceed the calorie content of comparable NSLP entrée items. Tony's® 4x6 whole grain, 100% mozz, cheese pizza has 280 calories, but exceeds the 10% saturated fat requirement. This product would not be allowed as an a la carte item because it does not meet all of the other standards even though it is a NLSP item and exempted from the calorie limit.
- No more than 35% of total calories from fat and 10% from saturated fat.
- Sodium content of 200 mg or less. However, for a la carte NLSP entrée items, the 200 mg does not apply. They cannot exceed 480 mg sodium per entrée portion as served for a la carte. Tony's® 4x6 whole grain, 100% mozz, cheese pizza example has 600 mg sodium. The increased sodium amount would be allowed if served a la carte, but the 10% saturated fat requirement is exceeded.
- No trans fat

Most frozen pizzas used in school operations contain part-skim low fat mozzarella cheese and/or a blend of mozzarella substitute. Schwan's is the largest provider of pizza to schools and have many products using part-skim mozzarella and reduced fat mozzarella. Most pizza and other frozen cheese entrees will meet all of the standards except for saturated fat. This will directly affect operators since cheese products are a major part of the NLSP meal pattern, and cheese is often used as a vegetarian alternative.

Cheese snacks, such as string cheese and cheese bars, meet all of the recommendations except for the 35% calories from fat and 10% saturated fat. Cabot has available a $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce light cheddar cheese bar that has only 50 calories with 3.5 g fat (2.5 saturated), and provides 15% of the DV for calcium. Land O Lakes has a Chederella® snack cheese that has 80 calories, 140 mg sodium, 7 g fat (4.5 saturated),

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and also providing 15% DV of calcium. However, these have 63% and 79% of total calories from fat, with 45% and 50% calories from saturated fat.

USDA provides cheese to schools in many forms, including sliced and shredded. Mozzarella, lite mozzarella, reduced fat cheddar, blend of American and skim milk, and American pasteurized process are the most popular. The nutritional information shows these products, like their commercial counterparts, exceed the fat recommendations. A 1 oz. serving of lite mozzarella provides 59 calories, 2.5 g. fat (38% total calories from fat, 37% calories from saturated fat) and 192 mg sodium. A 1 oz. serving of reduced fat cheddar cheese provides 80 calories, 5.2 g fat (59% total calories from fat, 33% calories from saturated fat) and 206 mg sodium. The current USDA products do not meet the IOM nutrient standard recommendations.

Cheese is a nutrient dense food and an excellent source of calcium. The nutritional aspects of cheese products and snack cheeses are important when operators are deciding what to offer to students as part of a reimbursable meal, a la carte, and in vending. I do not believe school nutrition programs will discontinue the use of cheese and products containing cheese, but may revise specifications to shift towards less full fat cheeses. Pre-portioned cheese snacks that are lower in fat and sodium will be favored.

It is important to note that **combination products** are allowed if they contain the appropriate quantity of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains as recommended in the report. Other ingredients can include yogurt, cheese, refined grains, nuts and seeds. The fat content of nuts and seeds are exempted and do not count against the total fat content of the product in these combination products. However, all other recommended nutrition standards must be met. Cheese would benefit from this same exemption.