

Parents Can Now Ask Schools to Serve Soymilk

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nancy Chapman, RD, MPH, Executive Director
The Soyfoods Association of North America
1050 17th Street, N.W. Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 659-3520

Washington, DC, September 11, 2008 — As students head back to school, parents gain flexibility in what their children receive in school lunch lines. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced parents or legal guardians may request, in writing, soymilk as an alternative to cow's milk for children receiving National School Lunch and Breakfast Program meals. This change caters to the growing diversity of participants in the School Nutrition Programs and allows children with lactose intolerance, dairy allergies or cultural diet restrictions to have an alternative source of calcium at school mealtime.

Just like cow's milk, fortified soymilk helps build strong bones with calcium and vitamin D and contains vitamin A, iron and heart healthy soy protein. Fortified soymilk is also cholesterol-free and contains lower amounts of saturated fat and fewer calories than milk—making it a very healthy option for children. Parents wishing to substitute soymilk for dairy milk should contact their child's school food service program.

An increasing number of children have milk allergies, lactose intolerance, or religious/cultural food practices that prohibit milk consumption. Fortified soymilk provides these children with critical nutrients required for growth and development. Recognizing the need for alternative calcium sources and low-calorie nutrient sources, USDA has included fortified soymilk in food supplement programs such as the Women, Infant, and Children Supplemental Food Packages and now the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program. The USDA *Food Pyramid for Young Children* also identifies soymilk as an alternative to dairy milk. The Institute of Medicine report, *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools*, recommends fortified soymilk be offered as a source of calcium for school children of all ages.

"We are delighted parents can now ask schools to serve nutritious fortified soymilk to supply calcium and essential nutrients to growing children," said Ted Nordquist, SANA president. "This change by USDA brings us a step closer to ensuring our nutrition programs allow flexibility and better serve all Americans."

A variety of tasty, child-friendly soyfoods, such as soy nut butter, soy yogurts and soy-based burgers and nuggets, provide essential nutrients during growth and development. Soy products also reduce the saturated fat and cholesterol content in popular children's foods such as hamburgers and pizza. To locate soyfoods, visit <http://www.soyfoods.org/locate/soy-retailers-list>. For more information, visit www.soyfoods.org.

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The Soyfoods Association of North America is a non-profit trade association that has been promoting consumption of soyfoods in the diet since 1978. SANA is committed to encouraging sustainability, integrity and growth in the soyfoods industry by promoting the benefits and consumption of soy-based foods and ingredients in diets.