

Senate Majority Policy Committee Whole Milk in Schools Hearing, June 16, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Scavello and the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to speak about milk choice in Pennsylvania schools. My name is Tricia Adams. I am from north central Pennsylvania, Genesee/Potter County. Most everyone knows me as the typical Farmer's daughter, turned farmer, at Hoffman Family Farm, and a mother of 3 teenage student-athlete daughters.

Today the topic is the GOOD STUFF. The good stuff is a phrase I have heard many times throughout the years from my daughters and countless school children I have had the privilege of seeing on our farm tours. The good stuff is what they all refer to as Whole Milk, which is standardized at 3.25% fat.

Today, I am here to speak for those children.

Every day since 2010, our children have been denied milk choice in school. It begs the question: WHY? Why are we allowing a wholesome natural food product to be attacked and denied and substituting it with more heavily processed drinks?

You may say I have a personal interest in this because I am a dairy farmer, and I absolutely do! I have seen our industry weather many storms over the years. I have seen many farms shut their doors, and I have seen our future generations turning away from milk because of this no fat/low fat push.

As a farmer, I want the product I proudly produce every day of my life to be enjoyed and provided in its naturally best version. Whole Milk is known as nature's most perfect food. Why change it, especially for growing kids? Countless generations before consumed whole milk and benefitted.

Being a farmer and a mother, I have the unique perspective of seeing the lack of milk choice as a real issue through my interactions. I have heard their voices on farm tours, and the voices of my own children, and those in many groups and activities and gatherings in my kitchen. The voices are all the same, telling me: **"You always have the good milk, and why can't we have that in school? Help us get it back?!!!"**

Some say 'let's not rock the boat' because it's only a couple percentage points. They say, does it really make a difference? Just serve whole milk at home and 1% at school. YES, IT DOES make a difference. Turn it the other way, it's only a couple percentage points, so give them the good stuff.

The extra percentages of milk fat allow for better digestion, reducing some lactose intolerance issues (which is an increasing trend I see every year at our tours). The fat slows the lactose absorption, allowing the body to absorb it at a more favorable rate. Other studies show this also helps kids maintain a healthy body weight.

Milk also contains more than 9 essential vitamins and minerals, many are fat soluble, so the milk fat allows the body to get the benefit. In one study, Vitamin D absorption was triple for kids drinking whole milk vs. low fat. That's huge today.

Whole milk satisfies. We should want no kid to be hungry! Milk fat allows a body naturally to be satiated, so children can concentrate in school. If a hungry, growing child does not get that feeling, they will turn to sugary snacks or drinks to fill the void.

For some kids, the school lunch is the only real meal they get in a day. In fact, some kids get two meals at school, my kids included. For example, my girls leave for school early, most days skipping breakfast and running out the door in their typical teenage huff. Their after-school hours are filled with practices, games, meetings etc. while my husband and I are finishing our work.

We have the responsibility to help our children be the best they can be and allow them to perform to their highest potential. I feel strongly that our school lunches must be the best nutrition for growing children while they are at the peak of their day!

Because a healthy child should be our number 1 priority, please let us in Pennsylvania lead by example. Help change our school lunch for the better by allowing milk choice back in. On behalf of the children that asked me to be their voice and from me, a mother and dairy farmer, thank you for listening today.









