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Proposed FDA claim recognizes role of key nutrients in dairy in reducing osteoporosis risk

Rosemont, Ill. · January 5, 2007 · The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has proposed an amended health claim that would communicate to consumers the value of foods high in calcium and vitamin D for reducing the risk of osteoporosis. The National Dairy Council (NDC) acknowledges and supports the body of scientific evidence that backs the proposed claim, which indicates that a lifestyle that includes a well-balanced diet with adequate calcium and vitamin D, and physical activity, helps reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

"The proposed claim provides a clearer way to communicate the benefits of calcium and vitamin D in bone health," says Ann Marie Krautheim, registered dietitian and senior vice president of nutrition and health promotion at the National Dairy Council. "We hope the simplified language will help consumers better understand the importance of three daily servings of dairy to obtain these nutrients and reduce the risk of osteoporosis."

Together, milk, cheese and yogurt provide excellent sources of calcium and vitamin D. In addition to calcium and vitamin D, the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis recognizes the role of many other nutrients in dairy foods, including magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and protein, that work together to help protect bones. The report also recognizes the importance of regular physical activity in contributing to bone health.

Health professionals across the country continue to recognize the importance of dairy foods and osteoporosis. "A proposed new health claim demonstrating the connection between calcium and vitamin D and the role it plays in reducing the risk of osteoporosis will draw attention to milk as one of the richest dietary sources of calcium and vitamin D, critical for building strong bones in kids and teens, and providing the best defense against developing osteoporosis later in life," says Frank Greer, MD, FAAP (Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics), chairman of the AAP Committee on Nutrition. "While calcium supplements and non-dairy foods such as

calcium-fortified beverages are an alternative, these products do not offer milk's unique nutrient package."

The National Dairy Council and leading health professional organizations—as part of the 3-A-Day of Dairy program—work to educate families on how to maintain good bone health throughout life and reduce the risk of osteoporosis later in life, by eating a healthy diet that includes the recommended three daily servings of nutrient-rich low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese or yogurt recommended in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

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For more information on dairy foods and bone health and the 3-A-Day health professional partners, visit www.3aday.org.

To view the specific proposed health claim language, see the editor's note or visit www.fda.gov.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Before publishing the final health claim rule for use on product packaging, the FDA will review information gathered during the public comment period, January 5–March 21, 2007.

The proposed rule has two model health claims describing the relationship between calcium and osteoporosis:

- Physical activity and adequate calcium throughout life, as part of a well-balanced diet, may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- Adequate calcium as part of a healthful diet, along with physical activity, may reduce the risk of osteoporosis in later life.

As well as two model health claims describing the relationship between calcium, vitamin D and osteoporosis:

- Physical activity and adequate calcium and vitamin D throughout life, as part of a well-balanced diet, may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- Adequate calcium and vitamin D as part of a healthful diet, throughout life along with physical activity, may reduce the risk of osteoporosis in later life.

