World School Milk Day

September 2009

Milk helps school kids learn

World School Milk Day: Ontario dairy industry helps bolster better learning

For Immediate Release

(September 10, 2009) Mississauga, ON – Almost one million students in more than 2,600 Ontario elementary schools will receive a free carton of milk this month in recognition of World School Milk Day. Ontario’s dairy industry will provide the complimentary milk to mark the occasion.

Founded in 2000, by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World School Milk Day is celebrated in more than 40 countries. The day helps to raise public awareness about the importance of school milk programs and the health benefits they provide to students. Studies prove that well-nourished students are able to concentrate longer and perform better in school. Milk provides the nutrition children need and many other long-term health benefits.

Registered Dietitian, Shannon Crocker says “Children need healthy foods and drinks at lunch time to help them perform their best in school. Sugary beverages like fruit flavoured drinks and soft drinks provide a lot of calories with little nutritional value and they displace healthier options kids need to optimize learning.”

“The better beverage choice to fuel healthy growing bodies and minds is milk. And great news for kids, the chocolate milk that they love is just as nutritious as white milk,” Crocker said.

In Ontario, the Elementary School Milk Program has provided students with fresh milk at reasonable prices every lunch hour for 22 years. In the 2009-10 school year, the school milk program is expected to operate in more than 2,800 schools across the province, representing three-quarters of all elementary schools.

World School Milk Day also presents an opportunity to thank the thousands of volunteers who run the program in their local schools. The success of the program depends on more than a million hours of time donated by these volunteers each year. For almost a quarter of a century, millions of Ontario students have benefited from the school milk program and the community volunteers who run it.

A special World School Milk Day event is planned for September 29th at Queen’s Park in Toronto. The event will involve invited students, school officials, volunteers, MPPs, dairy industry representatives and the media. The goal of improving student success and providing milk to students in all elementary schools is endorsed by all of Ontario’s major political parties.

All 12 of Ontario’s dairies and all of the milk distributors who deliver milk to schools, plus Ontario’s 4,200 dairy farmers support World School Milk Day. Without their enthusiasm and contribution, providing free milk to almost 1,000,000 students for World School Milk Day would not be possible.

Note: Although World School Milk Day is suggested for September 30th, celebrations in individual schools may occur on any given day throughout September.

For more information please visit www.milk.org/worldschoolmilk

For media inquiries about World School Milk Day or the Ontario Elementary School Milk Program, contact: Roy Maxwell - 905-637-2463, 905-483-2463 (cell), rmaxwell20@cogeco.ca

Ontario WSMD is made possible only by the co-operation of schools and the entire dairy industry in Ontario, milk processors, milk distributors and dairy farmers