

# NUTRITION NEWS

## A Town Called Calcium Trims Down With Dairy

(NAPSA)—Milk, cheese and yogurt may not be the first foods that come to mind when dieting, but the residents of Calcium, N.Y., (pop. 3,300) are living examples that dieting with dairy can be effective. Collectively, residents lost nearly 2,000 pounds thanks to a 16-week community intervention program called Calcium Weighs In.

In an effort to lose weight and adopt a healthier lifestyle, residents consumed at least three servings of milk, cheese or yogurt each day, reduced calories and increased their daily physical activity. The result was weight loss: an average of 14.34 pounds per participant.

Recent studies in leading journals have suggested a link between dairy consumption and reduced body weight. The Calcium, N.Y., program put the link to a real world test. "Preliminary data indicates that calcium may be part of the body's natural system for burning fat, so it follows that adding dairy to your diet program may help you lose more weight," says James Hill, Ph.D., director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado, who developed and oversaw the intervention program.

America's dairy farmers and processors are launching a campaign to educate the public about dairy's connection to healthy weight and one approach to losing weight that involves limiting calories and fat in your diet, getting exercise and eating the right foods, including three servings a day of calcium-rich milk, cheese or yogurt. Ads running in newspapers and magazines across the country are just the first step. People will be able to log on to a special Web site [www.healthyweightwithdairy.com](http://www.healthyweightwithdairy.com) for more information, recipes and tips on including dairy while dieting.

### The case for dairy

Hill is one of several researchers who are studying the link between calcium and weight loss. "When



**Dairy naturally provides calcium as well as protein and other essential nutrients that dieters need and might miss when cutting out certain foods from their diet.**

people try to lose weight they often cut out dairy foods, but this could actually backfire. There is mounting evidence now that the calcium in dairy may help you lose the extra pounds," he says.

The pioneer in the exploration of dairy's effect on weight loss, Michael B. Zemel Ph.D., director at the Nutrition Institute at the University of Tennessee (Knoxville), found that calcium and other components in dairy affect fat metabolism in favor of fat loss. According to Zemel, dairy appears to crank up the machinery to break down fat and triggers fat cells to make less fat.

"Dairy is not a magic bullet—you have to exercise and reduce your calories," says Zemel. "But, there's growing evidence that milk, cheese and yogurt as part of a reduced-calorie diet can offer an additional boost to make weight loss efforts more effective."

In addition to calcium, dairy provides protein and other essential nutrients dieters need. A diet containing calcium-rich dairy foods also helps ensure that dieters are not losing bone density along with the pounds. Other research also suggests that increasing the amount of calcium in your diet may help reduce the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and certain types of cancer.