



# BULK MILK

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Where do I find milk in bulk?**

**A:** Before purchasing equipment, work with your local processor to ensure the availability of bulk milk sizes and flavors.

**Q: How are USDA requirements met for a reimbursable meal?**

**A:** By the time students have gone through the serving line, they generally already have a reimbursable meal. One variable to consider is whether your district has chosen the “offer versus serve” option for how you qualify for reimbursements. Audits in districts using dispensers have indicated no issues.

**Q: What type of cup is needed with the bulk milk dispenser, and where should they be located?**

**A:** We recommend reusable 9-ounce cups, one cup for each student participating at the meal period that serves the most (probably lunch). A case of 36 costs around \$30, but this can vary across the country. You can also use disposable and/or compostable cups. We recommend placing trays with the cups on a cart or on a serving line just before the milk dispensers if space allows. Or save labor by leaving them in the dish rack rather than handling them and placing them in another container.

**Q: Will switching to bulk milk require additional staff labor?**

**A:** Some schools reported that additional labor may be necessary to clean the dispensing unit and reusable cups and to switch out the bags. Other schools reported that additional time to wash cups was minimal. Cups can be washed by hand or with a dishwasher, so consider your available staff and the space and cost needed for a dishwasher.

**Q: I'm worried about spillage. What's the best way to educate students on serving their own milk?**

**A:** Schools have reported minimal spills after switching to milk dispensers. In fact, some reported fewer spills. Having a larger (more than 8 ounces) and wider (squat) cup helps students handle the trays better. Educating students on the new process prior to implementation will help. Bring each class and teacher to the cafeteria during non-service times and explain how the new milk dispensers work, how they get their cup, how much to pour to meet reimbursable requirements, and what to do if there is a spill. Put pictures on the milk dispensers to help them know each milk option.

**Q: What equipment do I need to serve bulk milk?**

**A:** Most foodservice equipment distributors can provide a bulk milk dispenser. Your Midwest Dairy School Wellness Consultant can help you locate a distributor in your area. We recommend you purchase at least one dispenser per serving line, with two spigots to offer multiple milk options – both white and chocolate. You may need more spigots based on the number of students you plan to serve.

**Q: Can the spigot(s) be secured after hours?**

**A:** Yes. You can put the spigot inside the unit and lock it until the next usage. There is also a clip you can use to cut off flow.

**Q: What type of milk bags are recommended, and will they require additional cooler storage?**

**A:** Bag sizes vary based on the model of bulk milk dispenser, but three-gallon (48 servings), five-gallon (80 servings) and six-gallon (96 servings) bags are all common. Talk with your local processor to determine what sizes they offer, and visit each school that is installing dispensers to determine whether they will need additional cooler storage.

**Q: How do I advertise the type of milk that is available in the dispenser and spigots?**

**A:** Magnets featuring pictures of the milk options work well, or you can wrap the dispensers with customized graphics.

**Q: How should we handle leftover milk?**

**A:** Solid and liquid waste should be handled separately. Students can pour their unfinished milk into a bucket placed by the trash cans or the dish window, then place their cup upside down in a designated dishwashing tray.

**Q: Is it important to track milk taken, milk consumed, and milk wasted?**

**A:** Yes. We recommend you study milk taken, milk consumed, and milk wasted, both before and after your schools switch to bulk milk. This will help you determine how successful the program is and whether you need to make any adjustments. We also recommend a pre- and post-switch study on milk packaging waste by volume and weight.

**More questions?**

Reach out to your Midwest Dairy Wellness Manager at [MidwestDairy@MidwestDairy.com](mailto:MidwestDairy@MidwestDairy.com)

*Re-purposed with permission from Dairy MAX 2021*