



# BULK MILK



## Standard Operating Procedures

Bulk milk dispensers are a sustainable way to serve students the milk they need while decreasing waste and increasing consumption. Bulk milk dispensers hold milk at a consistent, chilled temperature that naturally improves its taste and flavor. Instead of cartons, milk is served in reusable cups so students can take whatever amount they want – decreasing the cartons and milk waste in trash cans. Creating a strategy for implementing bulk milk helps ensure a smooth transition from traditional cartons and fosters success. To assist with implementation, Midwest Dairy has prepared this comprehensive list of Standard Operating Procedures.

### Roles and Responsibilities:

A successful Bulk Milk Program involves multiple stakeholders, all playing different but equally important roles, outlined below.

#### **School Nutrition Director:**

The school nutrition director is typically the key player in getting any new program started. Typically, a school nutrition director will make the initial decision to switch from cartons to bulk milk service and will obtain buy-in from principals and custodial staff. They are also responsible for training the rest of their school nutrition staff, teachers and students on new policies/procedures that go along with bulk milk. Additional responsibilities include equipment purchasing, food and equipment storage, and completion of grant applications.

#### **Principals:**

A principal's support of Bulk Milk can ensure the longevity and success of the program in their school. They can help obtain buy-in from teachers and custodial staff and support the promotion of the new service method with students.

#### **School Nutrition Supervisors and Managers:**

School nutrition supervisors and managers will oversee the program at a campus level. They will monitor implementation as well as how well students accept the new service.

#### **Cafeteria Staff:**

Cafeteria staff will be responsible for monitoring the bulk milk machine and how students use it as they move through the line. They will also be responsible for counting and claiming how much milk students take.

#### **Custodians:**

Custodians play one of the most important roles in any food service model – which includes providing valuable input when designing the program procedures, such as solutions of potential spills and waste. They may have an initial concern about spills, so consider noting that many schools actually see fewer spills with bulk milk than with traditional cartons.

#### **Students:**

One of the biggest draws for students around Bulk Milk is the ability to serve themselves. Involving students from the start of the new service method will help ensure they understand where to find cups; how much milk they need to take; and what options, if any, there are for them to customize their milk. This will help ease strain on cafeteria staff and get students excited about the new milk service. Consider offering a demo of the new bulk milk machine to allow students to test it out and become familiar with the new process. This will also allow staff to observe and make adjustments as necessary.

#### **Additional Resources:**

[Switching from Milk Cartons to Dispensers: A Case Study](#)

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## Why switch to bulk milk?

Studies show that switching from traditional cartons to bulk milk has many benefits, such as increased milk-take rates, increased consumption and decreased waste.

- Bulk milk dispensers hold milk at a constant temperature below 35 degrees, protecting flavor and quality. While cartons can also be stored at below 35 degrees,

maintaining that temperature can be more of a challenge, one that bulk milk dispensers virtually eliminate. This results in the best-possible tasting milk, leading students to drink an entire serving.

- Waste is immediately reduced by switching from single-serve, disposable cartons to reusable cups.

- Reusable cups appeal to students who don't like the taste of milk in cartons.
- Students are used to the self-serve beverages at many casual, quick serve restaurants and will enjoy the same method in their school cafeteria.

## Rollout Timeline

### *3-6 Months Prior to Rollout*

#### **School Nutrition Staff:**

- Visit local districts successfully operating a Bulk Milk Program to observe best practices and ask the school nutrition director for training materials.
- Meet with principal and custodians to discuss the new service model and identify any potential challenges.
- Determine what additional equipment will be needed and initiate purchase. Consider the below:
  - What bulk milk machine is best for each campus?
  - What type of cups will be used? Disposable or washable?
- Connect with your processor and let them know you are looking to purchase bulk milk instead of cartons.
- Confirm rollout timeline with principal and cafeteria staff.
- Determine how the milk will be counted and claimed to ensure the full serving of milk is taken to count as a reimbursable meal.

## Implementation and Logistics:

- Determine what, if any, customizations students can make to their milk. For example, will they be allowed to mix flavors and fat levels?

#### **District Administration / Principals:**

- Accompany school nutrition director on visits to local districts successfully implementing bulk milk to observe best practices.
- Approve equipment purchases, if necessary.

#### **Custodians:**

- Provide buy-in to the new service method.
- Consider if staff/labor schedules and responsibilities will need to be adjusted.

### *2-3 Months Prior to Rollout*

#### **School Nutrition Staff:**

- Finalize what claiming method will be used.
- Coordinate with custodians to finalize a plan for spills and milk waste.
- Begin to develop a "training" program to demo Bulk Milk service for students and teachers.

- Create a marketing plan to promote the new program. Consider items such as:
  - Posters and announcements
  - Posting on the school/district social media
  - Floor clings and signs
  - Letters informing parents of the new offering

#### **District Administration / Principals:**

- Support parent education of Bulk Milk service. Consider sending a letter to parents providing all essential information about the program.
- Coordinate with school nutrition on rollout process.

### *1-4 Weeks Prior to Rollout*

#### **School Nutrition Staff:**

- Test the bulk milk machine with your staff to ensure everything is functioning properly.
- Ensure all staff is trained on the new procedures, including counting and claiming.
- Demo the machine with students and staff. Observe the process and make adjustments, if needed.

# BULK MILK

## Implementation and Logistics *(continued)*:

### *Throughout Rollout*

#### **School Nutrition Staff:**

- Continue marketing efforts.
- Observe each campus during first month of rollout.
- Make immediate adjustments to the program as needed to troubleshoot issues.

- Solicit feedback from campus stakeholders, such as students and teachers, to identify areas for improvement.

### *1-6 Months After Rollout (Ongoing)*

#### **School Nutrition Staff:**

- Check Average Daily Participation numbers for improvements.

- Check all equipment to ensure performance.
- Meet with campus principals, supervisors and cafeteria managers to address any concerns or potential improvements.
- Observe milk-take rate, milk consumption and milk waste and record any changes from prior service method.

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## Equipment Guide

Outside of the bulk milk machine, switching to Bulk Milk service does not require a large amount of additional equipment or supplies. Other items to consider are reusable cups versus disposable and whether you will need racks for storage and/or cleaning. Use the guide and FAQ below to help determine what equipment is right for your program.

- Bulk Milk Dispenser approximately \$2,000–\$2,500, depending on brand and model
- Reusable 9-Ounce Cups approximately \$30 for a case of 36
- Dishwasher Trays approximately \$10–\$35, depending on size

### **What are the electrical requirements for a milk dispenser?**

As an example, many standard models use standard 115-volt, 60 Hz, single phase or 230 volts, 50 Hz, single phase. Be sure to test all electrical systems you will use to support the bulk milk machine to ensure that breakers are not tripped in advance of starting the program.

### **How many spigots are recommended per dispenser?**

The dispenser should have, at minimum, two spigots to offer multiple milk options – both white and chocolate. More spigots may be needed based on number of students served per line. This will vary from school to school. A three-spigot

dispenser is suggested for a school with over 400 students.

### **How much space does a dispenser need?**

It's safe to assume you'll need at least 39-1/2" H x 17-1/8" D. The single unit is 15-1/2" W; the double is 26-1/2" W; the triple is 37-1/2" W. Manufacturers may vary, so please check the specifications.

If your campus/district participates in FUTP 60, you may be eligible for discount pricing through approved equipment vendors. Your Midwest Dairy School Wellness Consultant can provide more information and direct you to those approved vendors.

### **What size bags are needed?**

This will vary based on the model you choose, however, standard sizes range from 3 gallons (48 servings), 5 gallons (80 servings) or 6 gallons (96 servings) in a milk crate. Processors may have other sizes, such as 4 gallons (48 servings).

### **What type of cup is needed with the bulk milk dispenser?**

Reusable 9-ounce cups are recommended, but disposable and/or compostable cups can also be used.

### **Do I need a dishwasher to change to a bulk milk dispenser?**

No, reusable cups can be washed by hand. However, a dishwasher is recommended. If you determine a dishwashing unit is needed, consider the space needed and cost.

### **Are dish machine trays needed? If so, how many?**

Yes, dishwashing trays would be needed to clean and sanitize cups. They come in various sizes, ranging from each tray holding 20, 25 or 36 cups. These can be sourced through any equipment distributor.

### ***Additional Resources:***

[Hubert Bulk Milk Dispensers](#)

[Silver King Milk Dispensers](#)

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## Staffing and Labor Costs

It is important to understand how a new Bulk Milk service model will affect food service staffing needs. A good way to estimate the number of additional staff hours you will need is to start with the number of breakfast meals your staff makes per hour and plan for an increase in breakfast by at least 50%. Additionally, look at your current schedule and determine if you will need to adjust the start time of your staff to cover the breakfast program preparation and delivery.

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## More questions?

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

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