



# **BULK MILK SUCCESS GUIDE**

**Learn about the benefits, planning logistics and common questions about bulk milk. Once you decide to start a bulk milk program, use our suggested social media posts to announce and promote your new program.**

# Bulk Milk: Innovative and Sustainable

## Use a Bulk Milk Dispenser Program in your school to improve:



Milk temperature – milk stays cold at a constant temperature



Student nutrition by increasing overall milk consumption



Sustainability efforts - less environmental impact with reusing cups and less waste from milk cartons



School meal participation



Students' milk experience - students love the cold fresh taste and that they can serve themselves

A bulk milk service model is an innovative and sustainable way to serve students the milk they need while **increasing milk consumption** and **decreasing waste**.\*

Bulk milk dispensers are better at holding milk at a constant temperature because the door is opened less frequently. Holding the milk at a constant 35 degrees **protects the flavor and quality**, keeping milk icy cold which is more appealing to students. Maintaining constant temperature in traditional milk coolers is more challenging because the door is open during service. With milk dispensers, milk can be served in reusable cups decreasing the cartons and milk waste in trash cans.

[\\*The Business Case for Transitioning to Bulk Milk Dispensers from Single-Use Milk Cartons in K-12 Schools | Publications | WWF \(worldwildlife.org\)](#)

# Planning Your Bulk Milk Program

Creating a strategy for implementing bulk milk helps ensure a smooth transition from traditional cartons and fosters success.

## 1. Secure Buy-in from Your School Community

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

### Key roles to consider include:

#### SCHOOL NUTRITION DIRECTOR

- Make the decision to switch to bulk milk
- Visit local districts successfully operating a Bulk Milk Program to observe best practices
- Gain buy-in from principal and staff
- Manage processes from purchasing to training

#### PRINCIPAL

- Lead from the top
- Gain buy-in from teachers and staff

#### SCHOOL NUTRITION SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS

- Lead from the top
- Gain buy-in from teachers and staff

#### CAFETERIA STAFF

- Fill and monitor bulk milk machine
- Show students how to use bulk milk machine
- Estimate milk usage by weight

#### CUSTODIANS

- Help design procedures for spills and disposal

#### PARENTS

- Encourage milk consumption in and out of home

## 2. Check on Bulk Milk Availability

- Connect with your **local processor** to confirm bulk milk is available in your area. If your regular milk supplier does not carry bulk, check with **local farms** that process fluid milk.
- Discuss your plans to serve milk in bulk with your local processor before purchasing equipment to ensure school nutrition-appropriate product, size, and flavor availability.

### 3. Purchase Equipment Needed

- Milk dispenser
  - Milk bag shuttles
  - Milk tube clips
- Equipment cart or table
- Cups (9 oz. preferred): reusable or disposable
- Cup holder
- Dishwasher racks for cups
- POS signage



#### Things to consider:

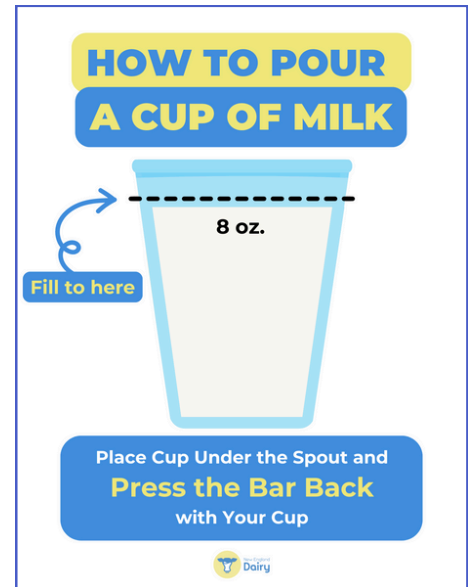
- Do you need a formal RFP for the equipment?
- Is there a grant available to help purchase equipment? Consider applying for a grant for [New England Dairy's bulk milk dispenser kit](#).

### 4. Procure Milk and Set Up Ordering Plan

- Establish **milk supply** and **delivery process** with vendor.
  - If milk is stored at the proper temperature, each milk bag lasts about 13 days.
  - Plan out your milk orders and consider how expiration dates may impact your orders.
- Identify **Amount** and **Flavors** to Order
  - Flavors:
    - Recommend at least two types per dispenser and consider fat type for variety.
    - Chocolate milk tends to be selected more than white.
  - Amount:
    - Use milk carton orders as a forecast tool for flavors and amounts needed.
    - Added excitement for a new product on the line may spike your numbers.

## 5. Provide Training

- Provide training for both staff and students for a smooth transition.
  - Staff Training
    - Share [How to Load a Bulk Milk Dispenser](#) (video)
  - Student Training
    - Post **signage** near the dispenser with instructions on how to use dispenser.
    - Share [How to Use a Milk Dispenser](#) video on social media. Consider asking classroom teachers to play the video for students prior to meal service.
    - Offer a **demo**. Allow students to test out your new bulk milk machine and become familiar with the new process. Staff can also observe the demo and make any necessary adjustments.



## 6. Market and Promote Program to Students and Parents

- Create a **marketing plan** to get the word out about the new program. Consider items such as:
  - Posters, signs, and PA announcements
  - Newsletter announcement and press release informing parents of the new offering
- Announce your bulk milk program on **social media**. See page 9 for sample post ideas.
- Order **fun items** from our [online catalog](#) to plus up your launch. Speak to your New England Dairy representative about your plans for your launch.
- Use New England Dairy provided **milk flavor magnets** to identify available fat levels and flavors. These magnetic labels will be provided to schools who receive a New England Dairy bulk milk equipment grant.
  - Alternative: [Print milk labels](#) to identify available milk flavors. Laminating is recommended for durability.

## 6. Launch

- Contact your New England Dairy representative about **inviting a local dairy farmer** on kick off day to speak with students about their farm.
- Take photos of students using the milk dispenser.
- **Share highlights** on social media.

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## Where do I find bulk milk?

Work with your local processor and discuss your plans to serve milk in bulk with them before purchasing equipment to ensure school nutrition product, size, and flavor availability.

## What type of milk bags should I purchase?

Each spigot can hold one 3-, 5-, or 6-gallon bag in a milk shuttle. Other size bags may be available, depending on processor availability. Once you have confirmed that your vendor has bulk in bags, there will be options based on gallons. Here's a serving size guideline:

Gallons in a Bag	Number of Servings (per 8 fl oz)
3	48
4	64
5	80
6	96

## Where should the milk dispenser be located?

Locate the dispenser before the cashier so the meal can be identified as a reimbursable meal. The dispenser can be placed on a counter, table, or cart--be sure it's low enough for students to reach and for staff to restock.

## Where should cups be placed on the serving line?

It is recommended that the cups be available before the milk dispenser. The trays with cups can be placed on a cart or on a serving line if space allows. Leaving them in the dish rack rather than handling them and placing them in another container saves labor.

## What type of cup is needed and how many should I purchase?

Reusable 9 oz. squat cups are recommended to ensure students serve themselves 8 oz and still have room to prevent spills. To estimate purchase quantity, look at your highest meal participation (likely lunch) and make sure there is at least one cup purchased and available per participating student.

## **How can I prevent milk spills?**

Schools have reported minimal spills after beginning to use the milk dispensers. In fact, some schools reported fewer spills. Having a 9 oz cup and wider (squat) cup helps the students to handle the trays better. Setting protocols for handling spills is helpful, too.

## **How are USDA requirements met for reimbursable meals?**

8 fl. oz. of milk from a dispenser is needed to credit for the milk component. A student can take less than the full 8 fl. oz and the meal will credit as reimbursable if your school implements offer versus serve and the student already has three other components on the tray.

## **Is a dishwasher necessary for a bulk milk program?**

While you can use disposable cups, reusable cups and a dishwasher are recommended. Reusable cups can be washed by hand, but this would increase labor costs.

## **Are dishwasher cup racks needed and if so, how many?**

Cup racks are needed if you are using a dishwasher. They are available in various sizes ranging from a capacity of holding 20 – 36 cups in each tray. Be sure to get the size that fits your dish machine.

## **How do I manage leftover, unconsumed milk?**

It is recommended that a bucket be placed next to trash/dish room window for any leftover milk. This also helps quantify waste and determine any reduction. Any milk left in the dispenser can be used the following school day.

## **How can I help students learn how to use the milk dispenser?**

Its is best to station someone near the dispenser during service times to assist students on using the new milk dispenser until students are comfortable using it. Place signs with instructions on how to use dispenser near the unit and flavor decals on the milk dispensers to help them know each milk option.

## **How do I prevent reusable cups ending up in the trash?**

It is recommended that students pour their unfinished milk into a bucket, then place the cup upside down in in the dishwashing tray. This process should be taught and reinforced as it will quickly become a habit for students.

# Sample Social Media Posts

## Sample 1:

Let's get moooving! New milk dispenser coming your way in 1 week.  
@newenglanddairy

## Sample 2:

Tomorrow is the day! All students can pour themselves a cold glass of fresh, local milk. Who's ready? 🥛 @newenglanddairy

## Sample 3:

(Insert school name) now offers self-serve milk! At breakfast and lunch, you can pour yourself a cold glass of fresh milk to enjoy with your meal. Real milk. Real good. 🥛 @newenglanddairy [include image]

## Sample 4:

We're excited about the debut of our new milk dispenser at (insert school name). Students are now able to serve themselves fresh, cold milk helping to reduce overall milk and packaging waste. 🥛 @newenglanddairy [include image]

## Sample 5:

Get a boost of nutrition by pouring yourself a cold, fresh glass of milk from the dispenser. That 1 cup of milk delivers as much calcium as 10 cups of raw spinach. Woah! 🥛 @newenglanddairy [include image]

## Sample 6:

It's true! 1 cup of milk has more protein than 1 egg. Pour yourself a cold, fresh glass of milk with your school breakfast for a protein-packed meal. @newenglanddairy 🥛🥚 [include image]

## Sample 7:

Fun Fact: Milk helps build strong bones and teeth. Pour yourself a cold, fresh glass of milk from our NEW dispenser with your lunch today! @newenglanddairy [include image]