

National Football League provides opportunity for farmer involvement

SUDIA's partnership with the National Football League (NFL) provides opportunities to work with the Carolina Panthers, the Tennessee Titans, the Atlanta Falcons and the New Orleans Saints to improve children's nutrition and physical fitness.

One new aspect to the program is that dairy farmers can get involved in SUDIA's NFL partnership by speaking to school children and attending events. Tommy Gentry recently attended a pep rally at Smyrna High School in Smyrna, Tenn.

"Our involvement is important because we are reaching students and increasing milk's visibility in schools," said Gentry. "Once students enjoy milk they will become life-long consumers."

This fall, SUDIA will expand efforts with the NFL to fulfill goals in the Child Nutrition and Fitness Initiative, which will help students eat right and stay active.

The "Fuel Up to Play" program encourages students to eat a healthy, balanced diet from the "Food Groups to Encourage," including low-fat and fat-free milk and dairy

foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains and to get 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

SUDIA will be distributing over 10,000 "Fuel Up to Play" wellness activation kits to fourth through tenth grade schools. The kits will inspire students with a menu of lessons and activities to support healthy eating and physical activity.

"Over 32 percent of American youth are overweight and don't get the nutrition and exercise they need," said SUDIA Program Director Dottie Ryan. "Working with the NFL in schools allows us to aid in fighting obesity and increase milk sales."

SUDIA's work with NFL teams began five years ago and has grown to include special events that involve player visits to schools, milk cap collection contests, junior broadcasting contests and other special promotions at regional grocery



Gentry stands with Titans player Kyle Vanden Bosch.

store chains.

For more information or to get involved in your area, please visit www.fueluptoplay.com or contact Molly Szymanski at mszymanski@sedairy.org.

New social media initiative revealed

Consumers are using the Internet to communicate everything, including opinions of the dairy industry. Social media is a new way of using the Internet to engage millions.

Social media is information that people create and deliver using online communications, including blogs, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace), video, (e.g., YouTube), and photo sharing sites (e.g., Flickr), forums and message boards. It's extremely popular because it allows people to quickly and easily form relationships and obtain information.

Social media's power and influence continue to grow:

- 90 percent of consumers regard word-of-mouth as the best source of ideas and information about products and services
- 150 million people are active Facebook users
- 13 hours of video are uploaded to



Alabama dairy farmer Will Gilmer blogs about life on his dairy farm.

YouTube every minute of every day

Building a strong, positive online presence for the dairy industry helps maintain public confidence in dairy foods, dairy farmers and the industry. By implementing new online programs we can address misinformation posted online by anti-dairy special interest groups.

SUDIA is working with Dairy

Management, Inc. (DMI) to establish a new program called myDairy, which encourages dairy farmers and industry friends to become online advocates.

The myDairy program helps mobilize producers across the nation to engage in social media networks and online communities through a password-protected Web site.

"Not only does myDairy teach us how to use social media sites, but it also gives us key messages to use to make us more effective communicators," said Will Gilmer, an Alabama dairy producer. "It's important to share our own unique perspective and experiences with modern dairy farming and present a unified voice to the public."

Producers interested in becoming online dairy advocates should e-mail Janet Grubbs at jgrubbs@sedairy.org for more information.