

THE NEW LOOK OF SCHOOL MILK: BEYOND THE TEST



Tim Kavulla was not part of the recent School Milk Pilot Test* but didn't wait for the results to enhance school milk service in his schools!



Tim Kavulla, foodservice director for Pasadena Independent School District, Pasadena, Texas.

As foodservice director for Pasadena Independent School District in Pasadena, Texas, Kavulla's impetus was clear. "I had a long-time concern about the amount of calcium my kids were getting," states Kavulla. "No matter what I did I couldn't get them to drink milk, especially the intermediate and high schoolers." Kavulla surveyed students, finding older kids wanted more milk. He also found the influx of competitive beverages contributed to the issue.

The Single-Serve Request

Having seen larger-sized plastic containers of milk, Kavulla approached his milk supplier, Borden's® Milk Products, LP, with his request. Borden's has a history of being customer- and service-driven. Ray Platter, executive vice president of Borden's explains, "Our product is

milk, but our philosophy is service. We go into schools asking 'What are your needs and what do you want to buy?' rather than saying 'This is what I have to sell.' Listening to the customer, both in and out of schools, has grown our business."

The Single-Serve Response

Borden's responded with a 12-oz. package for middle schools and 12- and 16-oz. packages for high schools in white, chocolate, strawberry and vanilla. Supported by a marketing campaign, "Look Who Grew Up This Summer?" created and funded by Borden, the enhanced milk package was introduced on the main line in August, 2002.

The Results

"In just four months, the volume of milk sold grew 80.8%," reported Kavulla. "And, students are finishing their milk." Riding the wave of success, cartons were replaced by 8-oz. plastic single-serves in elementary schools, with consumption going up dramatically. To top it off the milk is attracting more kids to the lunch line, with an increase of 1,500 to 1,800 meals a day across all schools. The new milk package program costs more, but Kavulla pays for it with funds from increased lunch participation.

The Final Word

"We are now providing single serves to six districts, all experiencing a 40-60% increase in product sales," explains Platter. "There are a lot of processors out there who believe schools won't pay the difference. That's not what we are finding."

"Enough interest on the school side will motivate processors to make the capital investment for single serves," concludes Kavulla. "My advice to schools is to go ask your processors. Asking may not make it happen, but if you don't ask, it'll never happen."