

At its 16th General Assembly held in Mexico City on November 6-7 2008, and after an in-depth analysis of the technical documentation supporting the relevance of milk in nutrition and its benefits to human health, the Pan American Dairy Federation agreed to approve the statement below:

## **DECLARATION**

### **“MILK AS A BASIC FOOD FOR HUMAN HEALTH”**

- 1- Mother milk should be every child's earliest food. It is essential for the child's proper growth and development, since it has the key nutrients required, in amounts adequate for the infant's correct feeding.

Consequently, the Federation supports maternal breastfeeding practices, in accordance with the World Health Organization's (WHO) specifications.

- 2- Owing to its unequaled nutritional features, **milk is the most wholesome food** for humans. It contains proteins with a high biological value, various vitamins and minerals that are indispensable for human nutrition, and it is the dietary source of calcium par excellence. As a result of the above, milk is broadly seen as an irreplaceable component in human nutrition.
- 3- Milk and its derivatives show some characteristics that are key for human health:
  - 3.1 They are a source of nutrients essential for our children's growth and development, such as proteins, calcium, zinc, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, vitamin D, and vitamin B complex, among others; hence, they are an indispensable tool against child malnourishment.
  - 3.2 Milk and dairy products are foods required by the Food Aid Programs that target populations at risk, such as children, adolescents, pregnant women and the elderly.

- 3.3 Their high contents of calcium, potassium, vitamin D, phosphorus and magnesium (elements that are key for proper bone health), makes them essential for bone formation and mineral preservation.
- 3.4 They play a key role in the prevention and therapy of various metabolic conditions, i.e., the so-called Non-Transmissible Chronic Diseases-NTCDs- such as Obesity, Hypertension, Diabetes, Dyslipidemias, Metabolic Syndrome and Osteoporosis, as well as some malignancies, including colon and breast cancer.
- 3.5 They are adequate foods for a good rehydration and replacement of muscle protein stock following sports activities.
- 3.6 They contribute to the prevention of dental caries.
- 3.7 They are adequate vehicles for other nutrients such as Vitamins, Minerals, Fatty Acids and fibers, constituting a significant group of foods in the fortification processes.
- 3.8 Several of them have functional characteristics as immune system boosters, offsetting the action of pathogens, while contributing to normalize the GI transit. Because of the above, they are adequate in the management of diarrheas, episodes of constipation and the prevention of other bowel disorders.

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