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Fun-Filled Classroom Game Teaches Economic and Nutrition Lessons

What's the official state drink of Wisconsin? What fruit does Wisconsin grow more of than any other state? What nutritional food product does Wisconsin lead the nation in producing? If you answered milk, cranberries, and cheese – you are ready to *Taste Wisconsin* along with local fourth graders in classrooms throughout the state.

Christine Lindner, Wisconsin's 63rd Alice in Dairyland, and the Wisconsin Dairy Council regional program managers are visiting Wisconsin schools this



spring to lead the interactive *Taste Wisconsin* classroom lesson. The session highlights the impact of agriculture on the state's economy and Wisconsin agricultural products' visibility in the grocery store. It is a cooperative project of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB) and the state Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP).

To stay up to date with technology advancements, SMART boards are now being used to present the classroom lesson. SMART boards incorporate touch-screen technology and are slowly replacing the

traditional blackboard within classrooms. The use of SMART boards increases student involvement and also allows for videos on cheese-making and dairy farming to be part of the lesson.

Lively interactive activities teach students about the state's agriculture industry, especially dairy farming and its critical importance to both the economic and nutritional health of Wisconsinites. This year's educational tour will visit fourth grade classrooms across the state, including schools in Waushara, Washington, Waukesha, Portage, Shawano, Waupaca, Sauk, Douglas, Washburn, Barron, Tempealeau, Jackson, Monroe, Vernon and Brown Counties.

Last year's campaign reached more than 25 percent of all Wisconsin fourth graders. The goal this year is to educate more than 10,000 students on the importance of Wisconsin agriculture. *Taste Wisconsin* is an interactive game which features Wisconsin farm products tied to the products consumers see in grocery stores. Through this educational



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game, the students will visit a "fantastic" Wisconsin farm as they learn about the \$26.5 billion economic impact the dairy business has on our state. For example, the students will learn that 90 percent, or almost all, of the milk produced by our 1.25 million dairy cows is used to make Wisconsin cheese. Students also learn that Wisconsin ranks first among all states in the production of cheese, making more than 600 varieties, types and styles. Some of Wisconsin's favorite crops such as corn, cranberries, cherries and potatoes are also highlighted in the interactive classroom lesson.

In addition to sharing the *Taste Wisconsin* messages, classroom sessions also include a viewing of the new WMMB *Art and Science of Cheesemaking* video.

To find out when Alice in Dairyland and Dairy Council staff will be in your area, contact them at 1.800.373.9662.

Many other dairy nutrition-related resources and materials are available for school foodservice staff and for classroom educators. If you know of schools in your area that would like to order materials or you want to learn more about the programs available through the Wisconsin Dairy Council, visit www.EatWisconsinCheese.com and click on the corporate link at the top of the home page. Or contact us by calling 1.800.373.9662 and ask for the regional program manager in your area.
