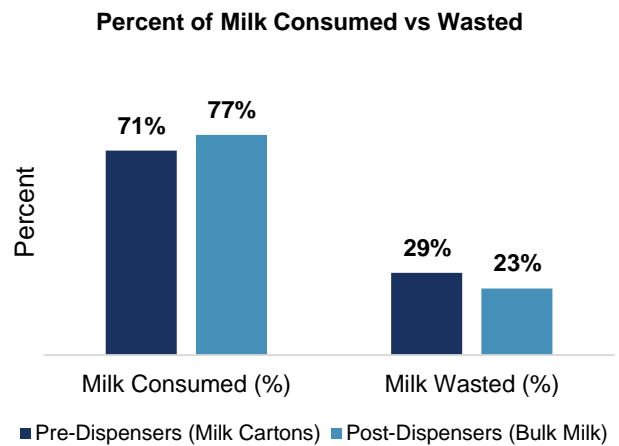
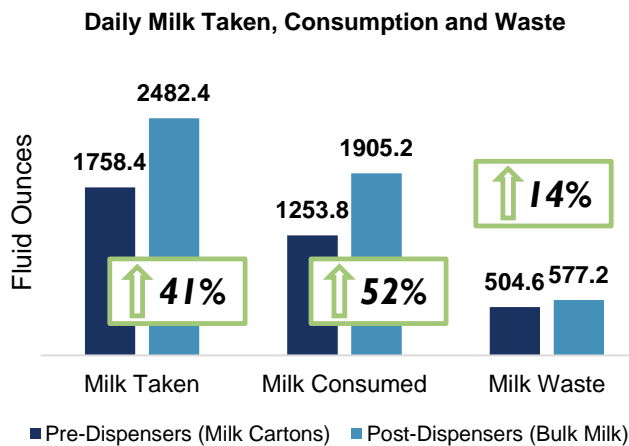


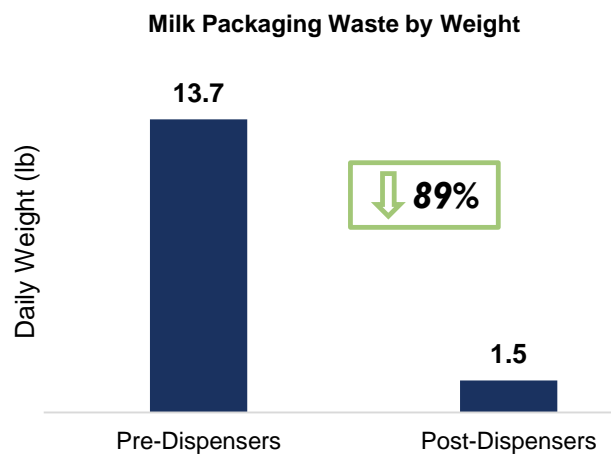
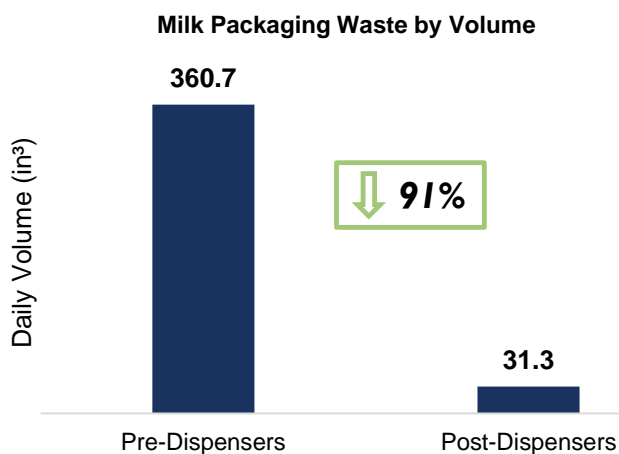
Switching from Milk Cartons to Milk Dispensers at Bluestone Elementary School

Harrisonburg City Public Schools (HCPS) School Nutrition has implemented a new sustainable initiative in the school cafeteria of Bluestone Elementary School – milk dispensers. Instead of being offered a traditional eight-ounce carton of milk, students now use reusable cups to serve themselves bulk milk from milk dispensers when moving through the lunch line.

Pre and Post Milk Dispenser Waste Study Results



Daily milk taken increased 41%, daily milk consumed increased 52% and daily milk waste increased 14%. Of all milk taken daily, the percent of milk consumed increased and the percent of milk wasted decreased.



The switch to milk dispensers amounted to a 91% reduction of milk packaging waste by compacted volume and an 89% reduction of milk packaging waste by weight.

Staff Response

Overwhelmingly positive. Waste reduction aspect of the milk dispensers was most important to teaching and administrative staff. Staff recommends other schools implement dispensers based on their experience.

Recommendations for Others Looking to Implement Bulk Milk Dispensers

Before deciding to make the switch to bulk milk, decision makers should consider the following regarding their capacity for implementation:

- Upfront cost of equipment needed for serving bulk milk
- Administration and teaching staff support for waste reduction
- Adequate kitchen staff (one to two people) capable of lifting for new bulk-milk related tasks
- Relationship with milk distributor who carries bulk milk that meets federal school nutrition regulations
- Space for milk dispensers and adequate electrical outlets before the point of service

When a decision has been made to use bulk milk dispensers, decision makers should consider the following in preparing for implementation:

Milk Dispenser Set-Up

- Place for machine before point of service
- Number of spouts in milk dispenser
- Adequate electric outlets
- Place to store cups

Kitchen Staff Training on Milk Service Procedures

- Proper storage and rotation of milk bags regarding expiration dates
- Proper cleaning and sanitizing of milk dispenser
- Monitoring temperature of milk dispenser
- Procedure for washing reusable cups
- Have at least one to two people capable of lifting three to five-gallon milk bags

Building Support from Teaching and Administrative Staff

- Educate staff on switch to bulk milk prior to implementation
- Promote waste reduction, a better school lunch experience for the students, and the ability for students to mix white and chocolate milk

Student Training and Education

- Educate students on the milk dispensers prior to implementation
- Allow students to use the milk dispensers and try milk prior to starting use in the lunch line
- Put pictures on the milk dispensers and educate students on how full to fill cups in order to meet reimbursable requirements as well as reduce spills

Tracking Milk Consumption and Waste

- Consider completing a pre and post waste study like the one completed in this report, looking at milk consumption, milk waste, and material
- Recommend a week long pre study and a week-long post study, however, would do the post study three to six or more months after implementation