**"Got milk?" More and more people saying no**

By Star Tribune, adapted by Newsela staff

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There's soy milk, coconut milk and flax milk. There are all sorts of trendy juices and bottled waters. But good old milk — the moo cow kind — is no longer America's drink of choice.

Fewer and fewer people are drinking milk. The drop in milk drinking in 2011 and 2012 was the biggest in more than 10 years, though interest in milk has been falling for years. People drank 25 percent less milk from 1975 through 2012, according to the federal government.

The tall, cool glass of milk with a sandwich at lunch or a burger at dinner may be a thing of the past.

“I was a milk lover and I grew up drinking it. You just kind of had milk with your dinner," said Amy Bryant. She is from St. Paul, Minn., and is the mother of two daughters, ages 8 and 5.

But Bryant said that the idea of adults drinking milk with dinner now seems kind of old fashioned.

**Milk Sales Slipping**

People do eat three times the amount of cheese than they did 40 years ago. But sales of milk have have been on the decline. Milk, it seems, has lost its central place at the American table.

Recently, the dairy industry even ended its beloved “Got milk?” advertising campaign. The ad campaign featured celebrities with milk mustaches. It became one of the most famous ads in advertising history. New milk ads will promote the health benefits of milk.

And even the most devoted milk drinkers — kids — aren’t drinking as much of the white stuff as they once did.

Nearly one out of four preteens don't drink any milk on a given day. And just 18 percent of preteens drink milk three times a day. This is down from 31 percent in 1978, according to a report from the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

At Mary Hanson-Busch’s house in New Prague, Minn., there isn't as as much milk in the refrigerator. “Every night when we sit down for supper, I grab a big squeezy bottle of water,” said Hanson-Busch.

She used to have milk at breakfast, either with cereal, a muffin or toast. But last fall, Hanson-Busch decided she didn’t need as much milk -- too many calories.

One of her two daughters decided to stop drinking cow's milk altogether recently, becoming a vegetarian and switching to coconut milk. “We go through about a gallon of milk a week for the family,” Hanson-Busch said. “We used to go through about two gallons.”

**The "Plant" Milks**

Milk "is really one of our best sources of vitamin D and calcium,” said Deb Sheats. She is a nutrition professor at St. Catherine University in St. Paul. Both necessary for good health, they often get left out of the American diet.

Cheese is also an excellent source of calcium, necessary for building bones. But cheese is often more fattening than milk, and doesn’t have as much Vitamin D.

Enter the “plant” milks — soy, almond and so on. They’re not really milk, but they are advertised that way. "Plant" milks have just as much if not more calcium and vitamin D, which are added in the factory. But they are more expensive.

“They try to place themselves as a substitute for dairy milk," said Marin Bozic. He is a professor at the University of Minnesota who studies how the dairy industry sells its products.

Some people have been concerned about growth hormones used in dairy cows, business research company IBISWorld found. Many farmers give cows artificial hormones to increase their milk production. Others have questioned the idea of drinking cow's milk altogether, said Antal Neville, an IBISWorld analyst.

The dairy industry is fighting back with a new marketing campaign launched last month. “Got milk?” has been replaced — except in California — by the phrase “Milk life.” New ads play up milk’s protein content.

The ads’ message is that milk provides the energy to power a person’s day, said Katie Anderson of the Minneapolis marketing firm Colle and McVoy. “It’s a much more practical approach than 'Got milk?'”

**Fairlife's Filtered Milk**

Bozic said people may be interested in milk that is processed to increase protein and calcium and lower sugar levels. Fairlife, a Chicago company, is aiming to develop this kind of milk.

The company is the invention of a husband-and-wife team who own a dairy farm in northwestern Indiana. Fairlife makes filtered milk with 50 percent more protein and calcium and half the sugar of regular milk.

Sue McCloskey, one of Fairlife’s founders, said they won't be competing with regular milk for sales. Competition will come from other drinks, from juices to "plant" milks.

Bringing people back to milk won’t be easy. Take the experience of Stacey Sundquist, a lawyer in Virginia, Minn. She and her husband have three kids under age 10 who drink milk regularly at meals.

Until a few years ago, Sundquist herself drank milk three times a day. Now, she drinks more water and has developed a taste for almond milk, including in her morning oatmeal. Sundquist made the switch after reading about the hormones given to cows.

“I started questioning whether I needed cow's milk in my diet,” she said. “I decided I really didn’t.”