

## MEDIA RELEASE

### *Dairy Health & Nutrition Consortium*

16 September 2011

#### **Regular-fat dairy back on the menu?**

Breakfasts rich in regular-fat dairy foods, including cream and butter, have been found to lower the levels of risk indicators for heart disease and diabetes, according to new Australian research<sup>(1)</sup>.

Scientists from the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute in Melbourne examined the effect of meals rich in either cream, butter, cheese, yogurt or low-fat milk on markers of inflammation in blood which are risk indicators for heart disease and diabetes.

The research involved 13 overweight or obese adults, who were given different dairy meals on different days over a 2-3 week period and found none of the dairy foods increased any of the markers. Breakfasts rich in cream, butter or low-fat milk actually lowered marker levels.

Previous studies have found high-fat meals containing a range of fat types increase the levels of markers related to heart disease and diabetes. This is the first study to test the effects of individual dairy foods.

The study, led by Professor Paul Nestel and Associate Professor Peter Meikle, concluded that single high-fat meals containing sequentially different full-fat dairy foods did not increase eight biomarkers related to inflammation or atherogenesis.

The authors were surprised with the results for the butter and the cream, stating "the surprising fall in the concentrations of a number of biomarkers, especially after butter and cream were consumed, remains unexplained".

Dairy Australia dietitian Glenys Zucco said when it comes to heart disease and diabetes it is generally recommended people select reduced-fat milk, yogurt and cheese and limit consumption of cream and butter.

"Yet a growing body of evidence from observational studies suggests regular-fat dairy foods have a neutral or even beneficial effect on risk of heart disease and diabetes," she said.

"Whilst more research is required, this new evidence may help explain dairy's positive role in disease prevention."

*This study was supported by the Dairy Health and Nutrition Consortium. The Consortium was formed in 2007 by Gardiner Foundation and its industry partners Bega Cheese/Tatura Milk Industries, Fonterra Australia, Murray Goulburn Co-operative, Lion (previously National Foods), Parmalat Australia and Warrnambool Cheese and Butter Factory, and Dairy Australia and Dairy Innovation Australia. The initial investment pool for research was \$12.5 million, including a \$5 million investment by Gardiner matched with dairy manufacturer funding of \$7.5 million.*

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(1) Nestel et al. (2011) 'Circulating inflammatory and atherogenic biomarkers are not increased following single meals of dairy foods.' *EJCN* Ahead of publication

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