

# In-Store Sampling Guide



*Creative and safe food preparation and engaging consumer displays are the keys to successful in-store sampling events. The tips outlined below can help coordinate and implement an effective sampling event that customers will enjoy and remember!*

## Preparation Materials

- ✓ Sink and trash facilities closest to sampling station
- ✓ Cooler/refrigeration facilities
- ✓ Large plastic bags (as applicable)
- ✓ Ice (as applicable)
- ✓ White label tags to identify/date product
- ✓ Knife
- ✓ Serving spoon (as applicable)
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ Accurate food thermometer
- ✓ Plastic storage containers
- ✓ Trash cans
- ✓ Trash can liners

## Sampling Materials

- ✓ Sampling table
- ✓ Nonabsorbent tablecloth
- ✓ Plastic gloves
- ✓ Serving tray
- ✓ Plastic sample cups/plates
- ✓ Toothpicks (as applicable)
- ✓ Apron
- ✓ Table tent
- ✓ Signage/banner (as applicable)
- ✓ Recipes
- ✓ Napkins
- ✓ Cleaning cloth
- ✓ Trays
- ✓ "Be back soon" sign

## Pre-Event Tips

- **Communicate Goals:** Prior to the sampling event, communicate the goals of the event with a store manager or dairy manager to ensure seamless and consistent execution. These goals include:
  - Communicate the nutritional and economic value of dairy within the context of the "Bank on the Basics" campaign
  - Prompt more dairy purchasing
- **Know Your Environment:** Confirm the time, date and in-store location of the event with store manager, dairy manager or appropriate in-store retail contact. Ensure the sampling station is located near the dairy aisle for accessibility to products. Ensure there will be washing, trash, refrigeration and preparation facilities available before and during the sampling.
- **Prepare Samples:** If preparing samples onsite, prior to event, prepare them in a clean, dry space and ensure they are evenly distributed among plastic cups or sampling containers. Store prepared samples in plastic storage containers with any pertinent information (i.e., product name, for "event name", date). If you are preparing samples during the event, ensure that all necessary materials are stored onsite in a clean, dry area.

- **Store Products:** Once sample products are in appropriate containers, it is important to ensure all dairy products are stored at or below 45°F to avoid spoilage. Pack and store all sampling materials (listed on this sheet) in clean, airtight containers to avoid unnecessary handling or contamination.
- **Gather Marketing Materials:** Secure appropriate marketing materials from Midwest Dairy Association (MDA) at [www.dairymakessense.com](http://www.dairymakessense.com) and incorporate them into the sampling presentation. These materials include: Bank on the Basics table tents, a banner, nutrient-rich dairy recipes and fact sheet.

## Event Tips

- **Organize Sampling Station:** Construct the sampling station at desired location near dairy aisle in the store. Set up table, tablecloth, banners, table tent signage, a small stack of recipes, serving platter, napkins and a small lined trash can. Ensure the station is equipped (out of customer vision) with a wash cloth, extra plastic gloves, toothpicks and serving cups.
- **Wear Proper Attire:** Wear clean, washable outer garments, aprons or uniforms. Servers will wear caps or other suitable coverings to confine hair to protect food, equipment or utensils.
- **Set up Samples:** Organize samples on the serving table so they are visually appealing and accessible to the customer. Napkins are to be made available and samples should be prepared so customers can access the product without having direct contact with the product (i.e. in a Dixie cup, on a toothpick, etc.). Only place a small number of samples within customer reach and replace samples as needed.
- **Engage With Customers:** Let customers know about the nutritional bang for their buck that dairy products deliver (see Bank on the Basics fact sheet).
  - **Call to Action:** Refer them to table tent with more dairy value information, distribute recipes and recommend dairy products to pick up in the store.
- **Manage Your Breaks:** During breaks, set up a “be back soon” sign and clear away leftover materials. When you return, restock samples as needed.

## Post-Event Tips

- **Discard Materials:** Discard leftover samples in appropriate trash cans, garbage disposal, etc.
- **Store Materials:** Ensure station is clean and remaining materials are stored properly. Collect any marketing materials that should be returned to MDA and store for pick up
- **Follow-up:** MDA will likely follow up with you and your team to discuss the event. Feel free to discuss the successes of the program and how MDA can further support these initiatives in the future.