

Schwan's Food Service Announces Significant Results in Sodium Reduction for School Pizza

Marshall, Minn. – (July 19, 2010) – Minnesota-based Schwan's Food Service, Inc. (SFSI), is the largest supplier of pizza to the National School Lunch Program. Currently, the company works with approximately 75 percent of the nation's more than 96,000 schools. Earlier this year, SFSI committed to reducing the sodium in its school pizzas by 10 percent by the fall of 2011. Dedicated efforts in one of the company's biggest brands have resulted in sodium reductions exceeding that goal as early as this fall.

Michael Wiser, senior marketing director for Schwan's Food Service, announced at the 64th annual School Nutrition Association's show that the company has achieved positive results with the reformulation of its Big Daddy's® brand, which represents approximately one-third of its school pizza business. "We're pleased to inform our school customers that this fall, twelve months earlier than anticipated, they will be able to offer their students a variety of Big Daddy's® pizzas with a 15 to 25 percent reduction in sodium." This, explained Wiser, is a meaningful start to additional work that is being done by the company in the area of sodium reduction.

The Big Daddy's® line of pizza products was first introduced in 2005 and has become a well-known brand for middle and high school students. Developed with restaurant trends in mind, Big Daddy's® provides students a fun pizza experience similar to a pizzeria. Much research was done to develop the flavor profiles for these pizzas, as well as the right nutrition. The brand also offers harvest crust varieties, which combine enriched and whole grain flours to meet the demand for increased whole grains in schools.

"For more than a year, we've researched sodium reduction for Big Daddy's®," explains Sean Trygestad, pizza category marketing manager. "Our primary goal, in addition to reducing sodium, has been to retain and enhance the taste quality, ensuring that students would continue to enjoy the pizza," said Trygestad. Taste tests were held with students throughout the process to confirm that the reduced sodium products performed as well as the original recipes. Final results were achieved through a reduction of salt as well as the use of sea salt.

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“All pizza is not created equal,” said Wiser. For 35 years, SFSI has focused on the nutrition of children, understanding that feeding America’s children at school is an enormous responsibility. “On average, one slice of Schwan’s cheese pizza provides as much calcium as an 8-ounce glass of milk, as much fiber as a slice of whole grain bread, and the equivalent of an eighth-cup of vegetables....all for less than 400 calories,” continued Wiser. When paired with low-fat milk, fruits and vegetables – it’s a nutritious option for lunch, and one that children and teens enjoy.

Since 2007, all subsidiaries of The Schwan Food Company have implemented internal guidelines specific to sodium and fat, anticipating the ongoing evolution of nutrition science and the dietary guidelines. Work has been ongoing at Schwan’s Research and Development since that time and SFSI has led the way in sodium reduction with these pizza products. The balance between taste and nutrition, two attributes of Schwan’s school pizza, is delicate. “It’s important that students eat well at school to perform to their best ability in the classroom,” said Wiser.

Children and teens eat a variety of foods during the week at school – balance is the key. “We know that pizza is a favorite choice, and we believe it’s our responsibility to make these products as nutritious as we can,” said Wiser.

With this reduction in sodium in the Big Daddy’s® products, SFSI is well on its way to meeting the Institute of Medicine’s recent recommendation to reduce sodium over the next ten years in the school meal program. “This is an exciting first step in shifting our portfolio regarding sodium content, and increasing our better-for-you options for schools across the country,” said Wiser.

Schwan’s Food Service, Inc., a subsidiary of The Schwan Food Company based in Marshall, Minn., offers value-added frozen foods to foodservice operators through more than 1,800 active distributors. Customers include chain restaurants, public and private schools, universities, healthcare facilities and convenience stores. The company markets major brands such as **Tony’s® Freschetta®** and **Big Daddy’s®** pizza, **Rising Sun™ Sushi** and **Minh®** brands. For more information, contact Schwan’s Food Service at 1-877-302-7426 or visit www.schwansfoodservice.com.

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More News on Big Daddy’s®

Schwan’s Food Service had more news to share about its Big Daddy’s® brand at the annual School Nutrition Association show in Dallas, Texas. In addition to its reformulation, the brand unveiled a completely new look, updating its signature logo, advertising, packaging, in-school signage and kiosks – as well as its tagline, which is now “Big Taste, Big Time!”

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“As a leader in this business, we want to ensure that our brand design reflects our products, and after five successful years in school cafeterias, it was time to give Big Daddy’s® a new, edgier and slightly irreverent look that would be meaningful to our middle and high school audiences,” said Sean Trygestad, pizza category marketing manager. Staying true to the brand, the core colors were retained, but the logo itself was updated, as was all of the supporting collateral. All packaging for the products will now reflect the new tagline, the new logo, and a fun black-and-white photo of a teen about to enjoy a slice of Big Daddy’s® pizza.

Throughout the process, the company partnered closely with its student focus groups. “We tested our logo with teenagers, asking them to select the logo that best corresponded to the brand attributes of authentic, fresh, great tasting, cool and high quality,” said Trygestad. The new logo design was the clear leader. The new brand ad was featured in the School Nutrition Association show guide, and the entire collateral package was showcased at the SFSI booth.

“We’re confident that the pizzeria experience around Big Daddy’s® will be even more engaging for students this fall as a result of our redesign,” said Trygestad.

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