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## Real California Milk Excelerator Innovation Competition Announces Health and Wellness Cohort at Program Kick-Off in Davis, Calif.

*2024 finalists capture wellness trends from improving digestive health to increasing cognitive function, powered by real milk and dairy*

TRACY, CA – Aug. 22, 2024 – The [California Milk Advisory Board \(CMAB\)](#), in partnership with [VentureFuel](#), has announced the eight finalists for the 6th [Real California Milk Excelerator](#) during the program’s kick-off in Davis, Calif.

This year's competition, centered on health and wellness, focuses on harnessing the nutritional benefits of real dairy and features startups with products designed to improve digestion, boost cognitive function, provide balanced nutrition, support hydration, and deliver sustainable, convenient solutions for busy lifestyles.

The cohort includes:

- [Smearcase](#) (Dover, Del.) – Smearcase is the first cottage cheese-based ice cream on the market infused with collagen. Featuring the most protein per pint of ice cream at 40 grams, this ‘better-for-you’ ice cream does not use artificial gums or sweeteners.
- [Stellify/Insymmetry LLC](#) (Yorba Linda, Calif.) – Stellify is a low-calorie, functional, dairy-based energy and wellness shot made with reduced-fat lactose-free milk for lactose-intolerant individuals. It features natural caffeine from coffee cherry, theobromine, and L-theanine.
- [Drink Todo](#) (Grand Island, NY) – Drink Todo is a high protein, high fiber breakfast smoothie designed to provide a convenient and nutritious solution for busy lifestyles. Featuring 25 grams of milk protein, 6 grams of dietary fiber, and enriched with essential vitamins and minerals, Todo offers a complete meal in every bottle.
- [Voyager Milk](#) (Boca Raton, Fla.) – Voyager Milk is the only USDA organic whole milk for toddlers, produced in a convenient stick-pack format.
- [Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co.](#) (Point Reyes, Calif.) – Curd Cup is a premium 6 ounce single serving cottage cheese with global savory flavors. This dairy-rich snack is a clean-eating option with protein, calcium and good fat to keep your energy going.
- [Pluff](#) (Toronto, Canada) – Pluff is a high-protein dessert primarily made from a combination of Greek yogurt, heavy cream, cottage cheese, and whey protein blended and whipped together.

- [Projo](#) (Los Gatos, Calif.) – Projo is an instant coffee blend of organic Arabica coffee, marine collagen, organic coffee fruit extract, digestive enzymes, and 100% whole milk. This coffee boosts energy and supports health and wellness.
- [TruJoy Yogurt](#) (Austin, Texas) – TruJoy is an elevated frozen Greek yogurt made with simple, natural and timeless ingredients. It boasts a robust nutritional profile, with protein and probiotics, as well as a clean label, appealing to the ingredient conscious.

In addition to a cash stipend, participants will gain access to a program of elite mentorship from successful founders, investors, leading corporate executives, and experts across design, marketing, sales, manufacturing, distribution, farming, and processing.

“The Real California Milk Excelerator continues to push the boundaries of dairy innovation, and this year’s focus on health and wellness is particularly exciting,” John Talbot, CEO of CMAB said. “We are committed to supporting these startups as they develop and bring their health-focused innovations to market.”

This year’s program will culminate in an exclusive look at the future of the dairy category during the “Future of Dairy Expo” on November 14 where attendees will be able to meet the cohort, sample their products and hear from experts on key category trends and insights. The event will close with the RCM Excelerator Final Pitch Event and finalist selection where a panel of judges will award up to \$500,000 worth of total value prizing.

“We are thrilled to announce the latest cohort for the Real California Milk Excelerator,” Fred Schonenberg, Founder and CEO of VentureFuel said. “Together, we are unlocking the full potential of dairy to enhance well-being and pave the way for the future.”

In addition to the primary cohort, this year the Excelerator has expanded to include an incubator designed to foster the development of early-stage and student-led dairy innovations. Seven companies will join the inaugural incubator cohort, including [Mighty Smooth](#), Sauce Plus, and [BuffMoo](#) in affiliation with Fresno State University; Joelato and [Moove Hydration](#) in affiliation with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo; Sol in affiliation with Chapman University; and [Yo’s Froyo Bites](#).

For more information about the cohort visit the [Real California Milk Excelerator](#).

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### **About Real California Milk/California Milk Advisory Board**

The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB), an instrumentality of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, is funded by the state's dairy farm families who lead the nation in sustainable dairy farming practices. With a vision to nourish the world with the wholesome goodness of Real California Milk, the CMAB's programs focus on increasing demand for California's sustainable dairy products in the state, across the U.S. and around the world through advertising, public relations, research, and retail and foodservice promotional programs. For more information and to connect with the CMAB, visit [RealCaliforniaMilk.com](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#).

### **About VentureFuel**

Founded in 2014, VentureFuel is an independent innovation advisory firm that helps the world’s best organizations commercialize innovation to ignite change. Its innovation programs solve clients' biggest challenges via startup collaborations. VentureFuel provides organizations like Comcast NBCUniversal, Dick's Sporting Goods and the State of California the tools to accelerate transformation with less risk, more speed, and greater proximity to the consumer than

traditional innovation models. Learn more at: [www.venturefuel.net](http://www.venturefuel.net), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). You can listen to The VentureFuel Visionaries podcast on [Apple](#), Spotify Simplecast or wherever you get your podcasts.

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