

Judging Criteria

Dairy Innovation Snack Competition presented by Dairy MAX

The judging process for both stages of the competition will be based on **five key categories**. While the first phase, which is the initial pitch entry, should consider these categories, a fully developed product and marketing plan are not required at this stage. For the second phase, which involves the final formal pitch, the expectation is that you will further develop your concept, product and marketing strategy based on the guidance received from your mentor and work in the CSU Spur's dairy lab.



Phase 1: Product Pitch Entry

At this stage, the focus is on ideating a healthy snack that incorporates dairy and aligns with the following criteria.

Product Concept Execution

Worth 25% of overall score

The product should focus on a healthy snack that's exceptionally well developed, highly detailed and presented in a clear and compelling manner.

Product Innovation or Improvement

Worth 15% of overall score

The snack concept should be innovative, offering unique features that significantly differentiate it from existing products.

Real Dairy Ingredients

Worth 30% of overall score

Real dairy ingredients should be prominently featured in the product and its marketing. Real dairy must be included as one of the top five ingredients. Real dairy ingredients could include milk, cream, cheese, butter, yogurt, cottage cheese, sour cream, whey protein and more. Dairy does **not** include eggs or dairy alternatives like almond, soy or oat milk.



Commercial Viability

Worth 10% of overall score

The snack concept should demonstrate high commercial viability with minimal barriers to market entry.

Meet Consumer Demand for Youth Snacks

Worth 20% of overall score

The product should strongly meet or exceed the consumer demand and be likely to appeal to the target audience.



Phase 2: Final Pitch Rubric Expansion

For the final pitch, the expectation is to expand on the initial concept by incorporating insights gained during the mentorship and lab work. The rubric for phase two integrates additional criteria into the existing categories:

Presentation Quality

Integrated into 'Dairy Product Concept Execution'

- Is the concept and its benefits clearly explained?
- Is the presentation engaging and well-organized?
- Are supporting visuals or prototypes included?

Market Research & Analysis

Integrated into 'Commercial Viability'

- Is there a thorough analysis of the target market?
- Is there a competitor analysis showing differentiation?
- Are market trends and demands considered?

Feasibility

Integrated into 'Commercial Viability'

- Is there a realistic cost analysis for production, distribution, and marketing?
- Are supply chain considerations addressed?

Nutritional Value

Integrated into 'Meets Consumer Demand for Youth Snacks'

- Does the product offer any health benefits (e.g., high in protein, low in sugar)?
- Are there any unique nutritional claims?

Innovation in Marketing Strategy

Integrated into 'Commercial Viability'

- Is there a well-defined marketing plan?
- Is there a strong branding strategy that appeals to the target market?

Consumer Testing & Feedback

Integrated into 'Meets Consumer Demand for Youth Snacks'

- Has the product been tested with actual consumers?
- How well has consumer feedback been integrated into the final concept?

Legal & Regulatory Compliance

Integrated into 'Commercial Viability'

- Does the product meet all labeling requirements?
- Does it adhere to food safety standards and regulations?

Scalability

Integrated into 'Commercial Viability'

- Can the product be scaled up for mass production?
- Is there potential for market expansion?

Taste & Sensory Appeal

Integrated into 'Meets Consumer Demand for Youth Snacks'

- How appealing is the taste?
- How appealing are the texture and appearance

Product Shelf Life

Integrated into 'Real Dairy Ingredients'

- What is the shelf life of the product?
- Are there any storage requirements?