



**U.S. Dairy
Export Council.**

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CONTACT:

Alan Levitt
U.S. Dairy Export Council
PHONE: 703-528-3049
FAX: 703-528-3705
alevitt@usdec.org

Chris Galen
National Milk Producers Federation
PHONE: 703-243-6111
FAX: 703-841-9328
cgalen@nmpf.org

Peggy Armstrong
International Dairy Foods Association
PHONE: 202-220-3508
parmstrong@idfa.org

NMPF, USDEC and IDFA Support Coalition Efforts to Facilitate U.S. Dairy Exports to Cuba

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) and International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) joined other food and agricultural organizations in support of additional changes in U.S. policy to facilitate U.S. dairy exports to Cuba and permit open travel for all Americans to that nation. The dairy organizations are members of the U.S. Agriculture Coalition for Cuba, a coalition of more than 30 trade associations and companies championing an end to the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

The dairy groups say one of the biggest impediments to trade is the lack of financing to allow for payment in a manner that it is commercially viable. They stressed the importance of policy changes that would remove costly and unnecessary burdens on U.S. agricultural exporters by allowing payment to pass from Cuba directly to U.S. banks in place of the current requirement that payments be routed through banks in other countries.

Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF, urged members of Congress to seek changes in policy that would remove travel restrictions and reform financing rules for U.S. food products destined for Cuba. "NMPF believes that unilateral U.S.



government actions should not hinder U.S. dairy exporters from selling their products to any nation,” said Mulhern. “We look forward to expanding our ability to more easily provide the Cuban people and those Americans wishing to travel to Cuba with the nutritious and safe foods that we produce in such abundance here in the United States.”

“Right now, the U.S. has been forced to largely cede this neighboring market to our competitors,” added Tom Suber, president of USDEC. “Cuba has been importing approximately \$200 million worth of dairy products in recent years, but virtually none of that has come from our exporters due to the restrictions they face in trading with Cuba.”

“Cuba is a natural market for IDFA members, and we look forward to further opening that market for U.S. dairy products,” said Connie Tipton, president and CEO of IDFA.

In addition to the embargo’s financial provisions, the three organizations said lifting travel restrictions could help U.S. agricultural exports by allowing exporters to more easily conduct business with Cuba and spurring greater demand for U.S. agricultural products in Cuba.

Members of the U.S. Agriculture Coalition for Cuba are the American Farm Bureau Federation, American Soybean Association, Corn Refiners Association, Illinois Cuba Working Group, Illinois Soybean Growers, Illinois Farm Bureau, International Dairy Foods Association, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Barley Growers Association, National Chicken Council, National Corn Growers Association, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Farmers Union, National Grain and Feed Association, National Milk Producers Federation, National Oilseed Processors Association, National Sorghum Producers, National Turkey Federation, North American Export Grain Association, North American Meat Institute, Soyfoods Association of North America, United Soybean Export Council, U.S. Canola Association, U.S. Dairy Export Council, U.S. Dry Bean Council, U.S. Wheat Associates, USA Rice Federation, Smithfield Foods, Chicago Foods International, Cargill and CoBank.

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The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), based in Arlington, Va., develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of U.S. dairy producers and the cooperatives they collectively own. The members of NMPF's cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of nearly 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF's activities, visit www.nmpf.org.

The U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) is a non-profit, independent membership organization that represents the global trade interests of U.S. dairy producers, proprietary processors and cooperatives, ingredient suppliers and export traders. Its mission is to enhance U.S. global competitiveness and assist the U.S. industry to increase its global dairy ingredient sales and exports of U.S. dairy products. USDEC accomplishes this through programs in market development that build global demand for U.S. dairy products, resolve market access barriers and advance industry trade policy goals. USDEC is supported by staff across the United States and overseas in Mexico, South America, Asia, Middle East and Europe. The U.S. Dairy Export Council prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, disability, national origin, race, color, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs, marital status, military status, and arrest or conviction record.

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), Washington, D.C., represents the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industries and their suppliers, with a membership of 550 companies representing a \$125 billion a year industry. IDFA is composed of three constituent organizations: the Milk Industry Foundation (MIF), the National Cheese Institute (NCI) and the International Ice Cream Association (IICA). IDFA's 220 dairy processing members run more than 600 plant operations, and range from large multi-national organizations to single-plant companies. Together they represent more than 85 percent of the milk, cultured products, cheese and frozen desserts produced and marketed in the United States. IDFA can be found at www.idfa.org.