



International Dairy Foods Association
Milk Industry Foundation
National Cheese Institute
International Ice Cream Association



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Peggy Armstrong, IDFA, (202) 220-3508
Christopher Galen, NMPF, (703) 243-6111

IDFA and NMPF Urge South Dakota Lawmakers to Reject State Legislation Easing Regulations of Sales of Unpasteurized Milk

(Washington, D.C. – February 6, 2014) Due to the significant public health risks associated with the consumption of raw milk, the two organizations representing the nation’s dairy farmers and dairy companies jointly urged state lawmakers in South Dakota to reject efforts easing regulations surrounding raw milk sales directly to consumers.

In a [letter sent Wednesday](#) to South Dakota state senators, the International Dairy Foods Association and the National Milk Producers Federation said that the risks inherent in raw dairy products are not worth any purported benefits to either consumers or producers of unpasteurized milk products. The two associations urged lawmakers to reject Senate Bill No. 126, legislation designed to further ease the sale of unpasteurized milk in South Dakota. The measure is the subject of a hearing in Pierre, S.D. on Friday.

“Consumption of raw milk is a demonstrated public health risk. The link between raw milk and foodborne illness has been well-documented in the scientific literature, with evidence spanning nearly 100 years. Raw milk is a key vehicle in the transmission of human pathogens, including *E. coli* O157:H7, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *Salmonella*,” the organizations wrote.

Federal law prohibits the interstate sale of raw milk, but allows states individual discretion to regulate raw milk sales within their borders. Several states in recent years have considered legislation expanding the sales of raw milk, even as the product has been repeatedly linked to serious illnesses from coast to coast. At a school event in Wisconsin in 2011, 16 individuals, including fourth-grade students and adults, drank raw milk donated by a parent and later suffered from diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea, and vomiting from *Campylobacter* infections.

The two dairy groups mentioned in the letter that “the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has reported that nearly 75 percent of raw milk-associated outbreaks have occurred in states where sale of raw milk was legal. Legalizing the state-wide sale of raw milk in South Dakota increases the risk to public health, opening up the state’s consumers to the inevitable consequence of falling victim to a foodborne illness. No matter how carefully it is produced, raw milk is inherently dangerous. Americans have become ill after consuming raw milk obtained from farms of varying sizes, from cow-share programs, and from licensed, permitted, or certified raw milk producers.”

“Nationally, our dairy industry benefits from a very high degree of consumer confidence – confidence built in large part due to the excellent food safety record of milk and dairy products. Current statistics estimate only 1-2 percent of reported foodborne outbreaks are attributed to dairy products. However, of those, over 70 percent have been attributed to raw milk and inappropriately-aged raw milk cheeses. In a 2007 report, the CDC concluded that “State milk regulations and methods for their enforcement should be reviewed and strengthened to minimize the hazards of raw milk”. Loosening the regulations surrounding raw milk through SB 126 would be a step in the wrong direction.”

“While choice is an important value, it should not pre-empt consumers’ well-being. To further ease the regulations surrounding the state-wide sale of raw milk is an unnecessary risk to consumer safety. Therefore, we strongly urge you to oppose Senate Bill 126,” the letter said.

###

About IDFA

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 within 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 nearly 200 dairy processing members run nearly 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, ice cream and frozen desserts produced and marketed in the United States. IDFA can be found online at www.idfa.org.

About NMPF

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