



U.S. Dairy
Export Council.

Ingredients | Products | Global Markets



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 2, 2016

CONTACT:

Clemente Santiago
U.S. Dairy Export Council
PHONE: 703-528-3049
FAX: 703-528-3705
csantiago@usdec.org

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

Dairy Industry Commends U.S. Administration for Securing Clarity on U.S. Market Access Rights under Central American FTA

The dairy industry today thanked the U.S. government for its extensive work aimed at securing clarifications regarding the right to use several generic cheese names in exports to Honduras while also establishing a better model for how Central American countries can more reliably provide such information in the future.

Honduras is an important trading partner in a growing region for U.S. dairy exports. It is a member of the U.S.-Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). U.S. dairy exports to CAFTA partners totaled \$109 million last year, with Honduras ranking second in the FTA region.

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) said they appreciated the Administration's diligent work with Honduras, which this week clarified the use of threatened cheese names including parmesan, provolone and brie. Although the results did not include assurance on the continued use of certain other common names currently protected in Honduras, it does provide important assurances on many common name products.

The threat stemmed from a free trade agreement between Honduras and the European Union, in which the EU secured provisions that threatened to restrict the use of numerous commonly used food names as a way to gain a trade advantage. After numerous discussions between the United States and Honduras, the [country agreed](#), among other things, to clearly spell out on its official website the scope of protection of



the names and to create a searchable database to identify geographical indications, the official designations that protect the unique nature of specialized foods. The database will also identify which elements of those terms are deemed to be generic. In addition, Honduras committed to other steps such as providing similar clarifications for future GI applications.

“The dairy industry has worked closely with the Administration for several years to mitigate potential damage to our CAFTA market access opportunities arising from the Central America – EU FTA,” said NMPF President and CEO Jim Mulhern. “USTR’s work with Honduras was particularly important, since a previous lack of easily accessible information in Honduras hurt our own efforts to determine our ability to keep using common cheese names in exports to that country.”

Tom Suber, president of USDEC, also praised this latest accomplishment, while stressing that this was one victory in a continuing battle with Europe over geographical indications.

“Essentially, through geographical indications provisions in its FTAs, Europe wants to monopolize the use of food names that have long been in the public domain,” Suber said. “We encourage USTR keep working in additional markets – both in Central America and around the globe – to preserve our ability to use these common cheese names, particularly in countries with which we have our own free trade agreements.”

###

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 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 30 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 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.