



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



U.S. Dairy
Export Council
Ingredients | Products | Global Markets

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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177 House Members Urge the Obama Administration To Remove EU Trade Barriers Hampering U.S. Dairy Industry

(Washington, DC, May 15, 2014) – A bipartisan group of 177 members of the U.S. House of Representatives today urged the Obama administration to use the transatlantic trade talks with the European Union (EU) to address a variety of export barriers hampering the U.S. dairy industry. Among the barriers are the EU's recent efforts to prevent U.S. companies from using common food names like parmesan and feta in export markets, including the EU, and even in the U.S. domestic market.

The Congressional Dairy Farmer Caucus co-chairs, led by Reps. Reid Ribble and Peter Welch, spearheaded the letter to U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. In that message House members said negotiations with the European Union over the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) offer a good opportunity to address protectionist measures that block U.S. dairy sales to 500 million consumers. "We urge you to achieve a strong and beneficial outcome for the U.S. dairy industry in these trade negotiations," the letter said.

The House members noted that EU dairy tariffs, which average roughly three times the level of U.S. dairy tariffs, have contributed to the \$1.3 billion trade deficit for U.S. dairy products. "While the EU enjoys a country-specific tariff rate quota for dairy access into the U.S. market, the U.S. has no such similar preferential access to EU countries," they said. "Furthermore, while U.S. certification requirements for the vast majority of EU dairy products are relatively nominal, EU certificate requirements for dairy products are more extensive, impeding U.S. access into the EU market." EU non-tariff barriers are a major impediment for U.S. imports.

Also in the letter, House members singled out EU efforts to restrict the use of many common food names – including a number of cheese names used in this country for decades, such as parmesan and potentially havarti – under the guise of geographical indication regulations. "The EU is taking a mechanism that was created to protect consumers against misleading information and instead using it to carve out exclusive market access for its own producers," they said. "This type of barrier to trade and commerce defies the fundamental goals of a trade agreement, and we urge you to work aggressively against the EU's efforts"

With the exception of the EU market, U.S. dairy exports have risen dramatically across the globe in recent years, reaching \$6.7 billion in 2013 and accounting for more than 15 percent of domestic milk production. The congressional letter noted that foreign markets now account for

one day of milking every week. “This dynamic helps support good American jobs in rural areas all across the country,” the letter said.

The Congressional Dairy Farmer Caucus has been an active and leading voice on dairy trade issues. The other co-chairs joining Reps. Ribble and Welch on the letter include Bruce Braley, Joe Courtney, Tom Petri, David Valadao, and Tim Walz.

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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.

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's dairy processing members provide more than 85 percent of the milk, cultured products, cheese, ice cream and frozen desserts produced and marketed in the United States. Visit IDFA at www.idfa.org.