



NEWS RELEASE

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White House Asked to Challenge WHO Proposal Discouraging Dairy for Children up to Age 3

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. dairy industry today urged the White House to challenge a World Health Organization (WHO) proposal that would discourage the consumption of dairy products by young children, advice that contradicts the recommendations of respected national and global health organizations that endorse milk for its nutritional value.

Dairy foods are doctor-recommended, but the bureaucrats at the WHO are about to overturn decades of sound nutrition and medical advice, charged the National Milk Producers Federation, the International Dairy Foods Association and the U.S. Dairy Export Council [in a letter](#) to the Obama Administration.

At issue is a WHO guidance document that will be presented to the World Health Assembly (WHA) later this month, despite repeated requests from dairy organizations to fix significant problems with the proposal. The three dairy organizations urged the U.S. government to seek further scientific review of, and changes to, the WHO guidance and how it may be used in the future.

“Discouraging parents from providing milk, one of the most nutritious foods in the human diet, to their children flies in the face of common sense,” the letter said. “Increased milk and dairy product consumption in recent years has helped improve nutritional outcomes for hundreds of millions of children around the world. This very positive trend should be further encouraged, not thwarted by ill-advised guidance from WHO.”

Earlier this year, the WHO released the draft guidance document that contradicts existing U.S. and international nutritional policy. It would dictate sweeping new restrictions, directly discouraging consumption of milk, as well as other new limits on various foods including dairy products, by children up to age three. Although the intent of the document is presumably to encourage healthy eating patterns for toddlers, the WHO proposal as now drafted would actually have the opposite effect, as such restrictions would significantly discourage children’s consumption of nutritious dairy products. Two

different revisions made to the original proposal failed to adequately address that underlying problem as well as other serious short-comings with the document.

The letter went on to explain that the WHO proposal wrongly portrays milk and dairy products as an obstacle to a healthy start in life, contradicting the science behind U.S. health policy featured in the federal dietary guidelines and the advice of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The dairy industry letter noted that for American toddlers aged 12 – 24 months, dairy products provide 26.7% of total energy intake, 67.8% of calcium intake, 80.4% of vitamin D intake, 39.6% of potassium intake, and 39.5% of protein intake.

“Milk is the original nutritional superfood, yet the WHO is committed to a position that would discourage the consumption of milk and milk products,” said Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF. “We appreciate the Administration’s recognition that it cannot support an international guideline that undermines the critical role dairy foods play in early childhood health and development.”

“The WHO’s draft guidance is not consistent with available scientific data, including the research used for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans – or even with WHO’s own nutritional guidance,” said Connie Tipton, IDFA’s president and CEO. “Given its unwavering commitment to the health of our children, we encourage the Administration to take the necessary steps to press the WHO to reconsider this deeply flawed guideline.”

“This issue affects not only the health of American toddlers, but hundreds of millions of young children around the world,” said Tom Suber, president of USDEC. “Our exporters have worked with countless local processors to help kids get a better start in life through higher rates of dairy consumption. The U.S. government has to ensure the WHO doesn’t throw the baby out with the bathwater by discouraging the benefits of dairy consumption through misdirected advice on good nutrition for children.”

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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 USDEC

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.

About NMPF

The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the wellbeing 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 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit www.nmpf.org for more information.