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NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. Calls on Russia to End Olympic-Size Games Being Played over Dairy Exports

The U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) and the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) are calling on Russian authorities to end its country's three-year embargo of U.S. dairy products. The groups' call for action follows Russia's refusal to accept a New York company's Greek yogurt for consumption by U.S. athletes at the winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. "This is yet another example of how Russia's blockade of U.S. dairy products is harming U.S. companies," says Tom Suber, USDEC president.

Media reports have indicated that a large shipment of yogurt from Chobani was refused entry into Russia, even though the company is a major sponsor of the U.S. Olympic team. "Russia has turned a cold shoulder to many U.S. businesses trying to ship dairy products to Russia, despite our ample efforts during the past three years to prove their safety and quality. Reopening this market on a permanent basis would be a great benefit for U.S. companies and Russian consumers," says Suber.

Jim Mulhern, NMPF president & CEO, concurs: "With Russia's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), it's incumbent on them to live up to WTO trading obligations on fundamental food safety requirements. There is no rational reason why safe, wholesome dairy products consumed by millions of Americans on a regular basis would not be equally healthful for Russians. It's a shame they want cultural exchanges like the Olympics, but fear cultured dairy products. They'll welcome our Olympians but not their food."



In September 2010, Russia closed its market to U.S. dairy products due to changes in what it demanded on a health certificate, the official U.S. government-issued statements that have long accompanied product shipments in international trade and provide assurances regarding product safety. Russia and its Customs Union partners, Kazakhstan and Belarus, have not sufficiently engaged with the United States in laying out a reasonable path that would lead to a long-term solution.

USDEC and NMPF declare that it is time for Russia and its Custom Union partners to finally provide opportunity for U.S. athletes in the Olympics, as well as Russian consumers, to enjoy safe and nutritious U.S. dairy products. Both organizations urged Russian officials to work with the U.S. government to negotiate a breakthrough.

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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 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.

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