



NEWS RELEASE



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Contacts:

Peggy Armstrong, IDFA (202) 220-3508

Christopher Galen, NMPF (703) 243-6111

IDFA and NMPF Commend Senate Action on Child Nutrition Legislation

(Washington, D.C. – January 20, 2016) The Senate Agriculture Committee today approved legislation to enhance the quality of nutrition in federal feeding programs, including provisions that would help reverse the decline of milk consumption in schools and improve the health of America’s children, according to the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) and the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF). The two dairy associations praised Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) for constructing child nutrition legislation that is inclusive and bipartisan.

IDFA and NMPF support the nutrition bill because almost all age groups consume less dairy than recommended by the newly-released 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), and this legislation offers the opportunity to improve dairy intake among the nation’s youth. The nutrition bill approved today reflects the latest findings of the DGA, which indicated that consumption of dairy foods provides numerous health benefits, including a lower risk of diabetes, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease and obesity.

“Along with dairy’s long-established role in promoting bone health, reducing the risk of insidious chronic diseases and conditions demonstrates why milk is offered with every school meal and dairy foods are prominent parts of other nutrition assistance programs,” said Connie Tipton, president and CEO of IDFA.

The measure approved Wednesday directs the Department of Agriculture to review milk consumption in both the school meal programs and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). It also calls for adjustments to promote greater consumption of milk as recommended by the DGA.

Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF, said that passage of the legislation “will help reverse the trend of declining milk consumption in schools, a trend that unfortunately is in direct conflict with

federal Dietary Guidelines, which say children should be drinking more milk for lifelong health. If the trend is allowed to continue, it will have serious consequences for children's health today and throughout their adult lives," he said. Mulhern noted that from 2012 to 2014, schools served 187 million fewer half-pints of milk, although total public school enrollment grew during that period.

The Senate bill also calls on USDA to address the needs of lactose-intolerant students by offering lactose-free milk through the USDA Foods Program.

The child nutrition reauthorization bill is now expected to move to the full Senate for consideration. The House has begun consideration of a similar measure but has not approved any legislation so far. Authorization for federal child nutrition programs formally expired at the end of September 2015, but the existing programs continue to operate pending approval of the reauthorization bill.

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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 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 more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit www.nmpf.org for more information.