



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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Peggy Armstrong
202-220-3508

Chris Galen
(703) 243-6111

Dairy Groups Urge Senators to Include Raw Milk Facilities in Food Safety Regulations

Other Requests: Harmonize Regulations and Avoid Duplicate Fees

(November 13, 2009 – Washington, D.C.) Although unpasteurized, or raw, milk products pose a significant food safety hazard, facilities producing these products are not covered by any of the food safety regulations proposed so far this year by Congress. These facilities also remain exempt from existing regulations enforced by all states, which are known as the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO), that set the standard for maintaining the safety of the nation's milk and milk product supply. Cheeses made from unpasteurized milk that have been aged to eliminate the risk of food borne illnesses are not considered raw milk products.

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) and the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) have asked senators planning to mark up key food safety legislation next week to rectify this omission. In a letter to Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, and Michael Enzi (R-WY), the committee's ranking member, the dairy groups called for requiring all facilities producing raw or unpasteurized milk products for direct human consumption to register with FDA and adhere to the tried-and-true food safety requirements that are followed by all other facilities producing milk products.

"Before pasteurization became widely utilized during the 1920s, human consumption of raw milk was one of the major sources of food borne illnesses and one of the primary causes of infant mortality," said IDFA CEO Connie Tipton and NMPF CEO Jerry Kozak in the letter. "It is important to the health of the American public, and for the continued confidence in the dairy industry, that the new food safety legislation bolsters the success of the PMO program and applies any new FDA requirements to raw milk and raw dairy products."

The PMO covers all aspects of hazard analysis, planning and monitoring from farm to plant to delivery of finished milk products to retail outlets. These extensive requirements are enhanced and updated every two years through a coordinated program between FDA and state regulatory departments, resulting in very low numbers of food safety problems for pasteurized dairy products.

Raw milk products intended for human consumption have been associated with a much higher incidence of food-related illnesses. But these products and facilities producing them are not required to comply with food safety plans, record keeping and access, and other regulations that are triggered by registration with FDA.

IDFA and NMPF support the proposed "FDA Food Safety Modernization Act" and urge the senators to expand the regulations to include facilities producing raw milk products for direct human consumption. In addition, the dairy groups would like the bill to recognize that state inspections of dairy facilities under the PMO already meets necessary food safety requirements and no duplicate functions are warranted.

Because facilities following the PMO already pay fees for state licensing and inspections, IDFA and NMPF recommend that these state fees be credited against any new FDA registration fees if such fees are added to the food safety bill.

#

The **International Dairy Foods Association**, Washington, D.C., represents the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industries and their suppliers, with a membership of 550 companies representing a \$110-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 220 dairy processing members run more than 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 and frozen desserts produced and marketed in the United States. IDFA can be found online at www.idfa.org.

The **National Milk Producers Federation**, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's 30 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 40,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. NMPF is online at www.nmpf.org.