



May 28, 2013

The Honorable Governor Brian Sandoval
Executive Chambers
Capitol Complex
Carson City, NV 89710

Re: Veto Assembly Bill No. 209 permitting the state-wide sale of raw milk

Dear Governor Sandoval:

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) respectfully urge that you veto legislation to legalize the sale of unpasteurized milk and milk products in Nevada based on the significant public health risks associated with consumption of raw milk. Gambling with the health of your state's residents – particularly its children – is a bad bet. Assembly Bill No. 209 would allow the state-wide direct sale of raw milk, a food for which consumption has been opposed by every major health organization in the United States, including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The link between raw milk and foodborne illness has been well-documented in the scientific literature, with evidence spanning nearly 100 years. Raw milk is a key vehicle in the transmission of human pathogens, including *E. coli* O157:H7, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *Salmonella*.

Based on a 2012 report¹ from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), between 1993 and 2006, unpasteurized dairy products resulted in 73 known outbreaks – causing 1,571 cases of foodborne illness, 202 hospitalizations, and 2 deaths. The CDC also concluded that unpasteurized milk was 150 times more likely to cause food-borne illness outbreaks than pasteurized milk, and such outbreaks had a hospitalization rate 13 times higher than those involving pasteurized dairy products.

The CDC has reported nearly 75% of raw milk-associated outbreaks have occurred in states where sale of raw milk was legal. Legalizing the state-wide sale of raw milk in Nevada increases the risk to public health, opening up the State's consumers to the inevitable consequence of falling victim to a foodborne illness. No matter how carefully it is produced, raw milk is inherently dangerous.

¹ Langer, AJ, et al. Non-pasteurized dairy products, disease outbreaks, and state laws – United States, 1993-2006. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. 2012; 18(3):385.

Americans have become ill after consuming raw milk obtained from farms of varying sizes, from cow-share programs, and from licensed, permitted, or certified raw milk producers.

Nearly two-thirds of all outbreaks associated with raw-milk or raw-milk products involve children. For example, in 2011, five children were infected with E. coli O157:H7 after drinking raw milk; three required hospitalization with hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a serious condition that may lead to kidney failure. It is the responsibility of Nevada's leaders to make decisions to protect the health of the public, most especially those who are minors and are unable to make fully informed decisions that could have profound consequences for the rest of their lives.

One critical aspect of this high-profile issue is the tremendous amount of misinformation that has been disseminated regarding the supposed health benefits of raw milk. It is important to emphasize that no claim related to the health benefits of consuming raw milk has been substantiated by the medical literature. The scientific consensus is that raw milk can cause serious illnesses and hospitalizations, as well as can result in life-long negative health complications and death.

Nevada's dairy industry is a very important contributor to the state economy. A single case of illness – even one caused by a well-intentioned dairy farmer – that is attributed to raw milk or raw dairy products in Nevada would likely have an adverse effect on consumer confidence in and consumption of healthful, nutrient-rich foods like milk, yogurt, and cheese.

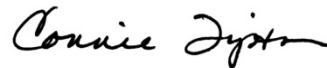
While choice is an important value, it should not pre-empt consumers' well-being. Legalizing the state-wide sale of raw milk is a gamble with public health, and represents an unnecessary risk to consumer safety. Therefore, we ask that you veto Assembly Bill 209.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Jerry Kozak
President and CEO
National Milk Producers Federation



Connie Tipton
President and CEO
International Dairy Foods Association

The National Milk Producers Federation (www.nmpf.org), 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 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies.

The International Dairy Foods Association (www.idfa.org), Washington, D.C., represents the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industries and their suppliers, with a membership of 550 companies representing 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 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% of the milk, cultured products, cheese and frozen desserts produced and marketed in the United States.