



April 13, 2016

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of America's dairy industry, we write to inform you about our strong concerns with a World Health Organization (WHO) Draft Guidance document which, if adopted, could have dire consequences for children worldwide and run directly counter to the strong evidence about the key role that dairy plays in children's diets.

On January 15, 2016, the WHO issued "Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotion of Foods for Infants and Young Children." This draft proposal incorrectly suggests that milk and certain other dairy products should not be promoted as part of a healthy diet for children under three. This notion is not only flatly wrong, it is also dangerous, and the U.S. needs to play a leading role in strongly rejecting it, as well as other deeply concerning recommendations in this proposal that would put sweeping new limits on the ability to convey nutritional information about dairy products to parents and healthcare providers.

Thousands of American one and two year olds drink milk each year, helping bolster development of both their brains and their bodies. Millions of toddlers in countries all around the world similarly benefit from drinking milk or other milk products, as recommended by nutrition experts around the globe. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) and many leading U.S. health experts, for example, have consistently pointed to the importance of dairy in young children's diets. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Heart Association recommend that children begin consuming milk at 1 year. In contrast, this WHO proposal would impose significant new restrictions and prohibitions on the promotion and marketing of certain milk products (including fluid milk) for young children up to three years of age.

Despite this overwhelming evidence that this Draft Guidance is unfounded, the WHO Secretariat intends to push the World Health Assembly to adopt it during its annual meeting next month, without conducting a full and transparent assessment of the evidence and an impact analysis. This is of great concern to the U.S. dairy industry because the policies proposed contradict decades of federal nutrition policy which recognizes dairy foods as safe, nutrient-rich foods to be encouraged for growing children under three years of age.

The Draft Guidance does not reflect recommendations included in the 2015 DGAs or the provision of these nutritious foods through government nutrition programs, such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). In addition, the WHO guidance could have a harmful impact on trade in U.S. dairy products. In fact, the Draft Guidance specifically favors locally-produced products by exempting them from the proposed restrictions, and singles out imported, commercially-produced products for inclusion.

The U.S., together with several other countries, provided extensive comments to the WHO noting many areas of concern with the initial draft guidance document. Unfortunately, those issues, and others we have voiced concerns about, such as potential trade impacts, are still largely unaddressed in the latest draft, which was issued in late March.

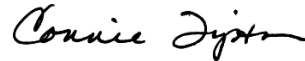
At this critical juncture, we seek your support in urging the U.S., represented by the Department of Health and Human Services, to insist on a robust impact analysis along with a rigorous and more transparent review of the evidence used to support the proposal before the WHO takes any further action to finalize the draft guidance.

We should not allow international organizations, with little input and oversight from Member States, to dictate nutrition policy with regard to the consumption of milk and milk products that flies in the face of common sense, federal policy and scientific data. The U.S. must insist on bringing rationality to this important debate impacting the health of children around the world.

Sincerely,



Jim Mulhern
President and CEO
National Milk Producers Federation



Connie Tipton
President and CEO
International Dairy Foods Association