



NEWS RELEASE



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NMPF, IDFA Urge Congress to Challenge WHO Proposal Prohibiting Promotion of Milk & Milk Products to Young Children

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Milk Producers Federation and the International Dairy Foods Association urged members of Congress this week to insist that the United States request a more thorough analysis of a World Health Organization (WHO) proposal seeking to discourage parents from feeding toddlers milk and certain dairy products.

At the beginning of the year, the WHO issued "*Ending Inappropriate Marketing of Foods for Infants and Young Children*," a guidance document urging the prohibition of the promotion and marketing of various milk products for children up to age three.

"The WHO guidance document is a de facto criticism of all milk consumption by toddlers," said Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF. "This flies in the face of all credible, international nutrition research, and would confuse consumers across the globe."

"The WHO guidance should be focusing on how to encourage the serving of nutrient-dense foods to provide young children and toddlers with a nutritious basis for meals and snacks," said Connie Tipton, IDFA president and CEO. "It should not restrict the flow of important information regarding the nutritional benefits of dairy foods for young children to parents, caregivers and healthcare providers."

In a [letter](#) sent to members of the House and Senate, both organizations want the U.S. government to insist that the WHO revise this document to rectify the misleading suggestion that dairy is inappropriate for young children. The proposal was modified somewhat in late March, but the recent revisions still run counter to established science that highlights milk's unique nutritional attributes.

The groups ask Congress to insist that the WHO conduct "a much more thorough analysis of the scientific basis for and potential consequences of this proposal before the WHO pushes forward with

further action in this area,” the letter said. “Until that type of careful scrutiny and revision takes place, we urge the U.S. to insist on the importance of placing this proposal on hold.”

If the guidance were adopted, it could have negative health effects on children worldwide. It also counters ample scientific evidence that dairy plays a significant and positive role in children’s diets, as seen in the recently updated Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the inclusion of dairy foods in programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

NMPF and IDFA are part of a coalition that objects to the WHO proposal. Among their efforts, NMPF and IDFA have met with numerous U.S. agencies and submitted detailed comments to the Department of Health and Human Services, the lead federal agency on the matter.

“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 letter argued.

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