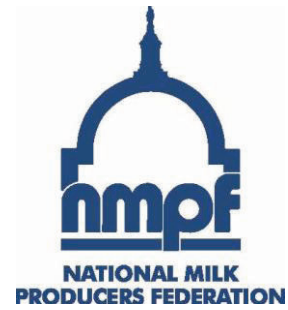




International Dairy Foods Association
Milk Industry Foundation
National Cheese Institute
International Ice Cream Association



April 4, 2011

The Honorable Governor Chris Christie
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

The Honorable Stephen M. Sweeney
c/o New Jersey Senate
State House
PO Box 099
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: Oppose Assembly Bill No. 743 permitting the sale of raw milk.

Dear Governor Christie and Senator Sweeney:

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) respectfully urge that you oppose legislation to legalize the sale of unpasteurized milk and milk products in New Jersey based on the significant public health risks associated with consumption of raw milk. Assembly Bill No. 743 would allow the 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 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), scientific literature, and state and local reports, the Food & Drug Administration compiled a list of outbreaks that occurred in the United States between 1987 and September 2010. During that 24-year period,

there were at least 133 outbreaks due to the consumption of raw milk and raw milk products. These outbreaks caused 2,659 cases of illnesses, 269 hospitalizations, 3 deaths, 6 stillbirths and 2 miscarriages. In 2010 alone, there were 11 outbreaks attributed to raw dairy products, causing 138 illnesses.

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.

The CDC has reported nearly 90% of raw milk-associated outbreaks have occurred in states where sale of raw milk was legal. Legalizing the sale of raw milk in New Jersey 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. 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.

New Jersey's commercial dairy farmers and dairy processors sell over \$1.5 billion each year in goods and services, and employ nearly 2,500 workers. This has a multiplied impact on the New Jersey economy of \$2.8 billion in output and nearly 11,000 jobs. Although New Jersey's milk production is only about 0.1% of the nation's total, her dairy processors produce about 2% of the nation's finished dairy products, making the dairy industry 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 New Jersey would likely have an adverse effect on consumer confidence in and consumption of healthful, nutrient-rich foods like milk, yogurt, and cheese.

“On a personal note, my professional career began at the New Jersey Department of Health, where I served for 12 years, including as Chief of Staff to the Commissioner of Health. Overall, I have dedicated nearly 40 years to protecting consumers, assuring food safety, and advocating for the dairy industry. I have never recommended to anyone, for any reason, at any time, to consume raw milk. It is disappointing to see that the public health gains we achieved in New Jersey in the 1970s would be compromised today by a conscious effort to allow the sale of potentially pathogenic foods. This is an affront to all those working to protect public health.” (Jerry Kozak, April 4, 2011)

While consumer choice is an important value, it should not pre-empt public health and well-being. Legalizing the sale of raw milk and raw milk products to consumers, either through direct sale or through cow-share programs, represents an unnecessary risk to consumer safety. Therefore, we ask that you oppose Assembly Bill 743.

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, 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 31 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. Visit www.nmpf.org for more information.

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), Washington, DC, 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% 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.