



International Dairy Foods Association

Milk Industry Foundation

National Cheese Institute

International Ice Cream Association

March 23, 2011

The Honorable Raymond J. Lesniak
985 Stuyvesant Avenue
Union, NJ 07083

Dear Chairman Lesniak:

I urge you to oppose A 743, a bill that would allow the sale of raw milk products to consumers in New Jersey. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has long advised consumers that the consumption of raw milk poses unnecessary health risks and should be avoided.

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'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.

The dairy industry has an excellent food safety record with less than 1 percent of all food-borne disease cases associated with pasteurized milk and dairy products, as reported by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Unfortunately, this reputation is tainted by the much higher incidence of food related illnesses from raw, unpasteurized milk and other raw milk products. According to the CDCP, 71% (137 of 193 cases) of the reported food borne illnesses from dairy products were attributable to consuming under pasteurized or raw milk, including one death. This is all the more remarkable when you consider that raw milk consumption is a small, but growing portion of total dairy consumption.

Prior to the discovery of pasteurization over a century ago, dairy products were the largest source of food-borne illnesses in this country. Naturally occurring bacteria in raw milk can cause a number of illnesses including tuberculosis, brucellosis, salmonellosis, listeriosis (spontaneous abortions in pregnant women), and food poisoning-like symptoms, some of which have the ability to cause long-term negative health impacts.

Pasteurization removes the great majority of these pathogens and, combined with refrigeration, has allowed the dairy processing industry to establish an excellent food safety record. Product testing, as required by A 743, is not an adequate substitute and cannot ensure the same level of safety. Increasing the availability of raw milk for direct human consumption will undermine and detract from the overall superior food safety record and safe image of all dairy products.

Although proponents of raw milk claim that nutrients are lost due to pasteurization, there is no meaningful difference in the nutritional values of pasteurized and unpasteurized milk. Claims

that raw milk has medicinal properties that may be disease-curing are also unfounded.

Raw milk sales cause illnesses, and often deaths, in the United States every year. Regulating the sales of raw milk will encourage its consumption when the correct approach is to warn consumers of its inherent dangers. A 743 adopts the wrong approach towards a serious health issue and I urge you again to oppose it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Slominski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jerry Slominski
Senior Vice President, Legislative Affairs & Economic Policy
International Dairy Foods Association