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August 6, 2008

United States Department of Agriculture
Child Nutrition Act Reauthorization

To Whom It May Concern,


Galliker Dairy Company, headquartered in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1914 and is a third generation, family owned, regional business. Galliker's also owns and operates a division located in Cumberland, Maryland – the Potomac Farms Dairy. The dairy specializes in processing and distributing milk, dairy products, ice cream and iced tea. Galliker products are available for sale in nine states – West Central Pennsylvania, as well as portions of Maryland, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, New Jersey, Delaware and New York. The Dairy buys milk from over 120 independent milk producers and serves over 100 school districts within our market areas.

Not only is school milk crucial to our business, it is also vital to the health and wellness of children in our communities. The USDA's School Lunch Program has a lot of participation in our community, and participation in the School Breakfast Program is growing. These programs are especially important for the school districts we serve within the rural areas of Pennsylvania, Maryland and West Virginia, where the economy is not good, and these programs provide healthy meal options for kids. I am concerned that for some kids, the milk they consume through these programs is the only milk they consume all day.

With all of the less nutritious beverages that are highly marketed and compete with milk, it is important that low fat flavored milk retain its taste appeal while still minimizing calories. For some children, milk at school is the only time of day they get milk. That is why we offer different varieties of milk to please children's palates while providing the same wholesome nutrition they need from milk. Not only do we offer 1% and non-fat milk, we also offer a 160-calorie low-fat chocolate milk, a 1% vanilla milk and 1% strawberry milk. These low calorie flavored milks are not only delicious and enjoyed by children in school; they are healthy, nutritious and comply with current School Wellness Policy guidelines. We believe it is important to offer these lower calorie milk options in order to stop the progression of Type II Diabetes and obesity among our nation's children.

Finally, I ask that the USDA maintain adequate funding for higher nutrition goals so that milk remains a part of these vital wellness programs. This is important both for nutrition education, as well as fully funding the WIC program and ensuring that school districts have the necessary resources to purchase milk without having to compromise other components of a healthy meal. Milk is a critical piece in maintaining a healthy diet, as it provides nine essential vitamins, minerals and as a nutrient dense food, it is far too valuable to be left out of these programs. In order to facilitate a shift from the obesity epidemic plaguing our country to the promotion of a healthy diet and active lifestyle for all Americans, regardless of their income bracket, these programs are crucial and need to be given priority in terms of federal funding and efficient management. At Galliker's, we see these programs working in our communities to better the lives of the people who depend on them, and we know milk is helping them achieve a healthy diet and lifestyle. I appreciate the opportunity to share this information. Thank you for your role in helping ensure these programs continue to serve our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Louis G. Galliker".

Louis G. Galliker
Chairman & President



Marva Maid Dairy

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Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is Scott Garrett (General Sales Manager of Marva Maid Dairy). We are a division of MD & Virginia Milk Producers.

It's important to note that milk is an excellent source of nine essential nutrients that children need to grow, develop and learn. Milk provides 3 of the 5 current indicator nutrients for the school meal programs (protein, calcium and vitamin A) and 3 of the 5 Dietary Guidelines nutrients of concern for children (calcium, magnesium, and potassium).

While we support national nutrition guidelines, it is critical that the guidelines established for milk be acceptable to students and implementable for schools and processors. Milk contains a complete nutrient package of nine essential nutrients and if guidelines too severely affect the palatability of our products, we may put child nutrition at an even greater risk.

The number one milk preferred by kids in schools is chocolate milk - by far. Approximately 70% of milk sold in schools is flavored and 80% of that is chocolate. In order to bring the calories down, Marva Maid is working towards a reformulation of chocolate milk that will minimize the sugar, but still will provide a product that kids will drink.

I would also like to comment briefly on the reimbursements in light of current market conditions, and what I have observed in schools recently.

We introduced milk in plastic bottles in high schools because older kids prefer these containers. The larger size gives them more to drink, and it seems more "adult" than the paperboard milk cartons that younger kids usually receive in elementary schools.

Unfortunately, as the cost of milk has gone up, we are concerned that some schools may switch back to paper from plastic because they can save about 5 cents per unit. This is unfortunate, because I'm worried that the older middle school and high school students will start choosing less healthy alternatives to milk.

The reimbursement rate needs to be increased so that schools do not have to make financial decisions that could have a negative health impact. Many schools seem to be cutting corners and making troubling trade offs to cut costs.

In closing, nutrition guidelines need to take into account a food's total nutrient package and role in a healthful diet, so dairy products can remain part of school meals that meet U.S. dietary guidelines.