



**International Dairy Foods Association**

Milk Industry Foundation

National Cheese Institute

International Ice Cream Association

January 8, 2009

Mr. Jim Messina  
Director  
Transition and Presidential Personnel  
451 6<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Messina:

On behalf of the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), I recommend that President-elect Obama appoint Dr. Janey Thornton as the next Under Secretary of Agriculture for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Affairs at the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

IDFA represents the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industries and their suppliers, with a membership of 530 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 operate more than 600 plant operations, ranging 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.

The ambitious mission of the Food and Nutrition Service -- to provide children and needy families with better access to food and a more healthful diet -- requires strong leadership and diverse experience. Dr. Thornton has demonstrated both. With her background in teaching and over twenty years experience directing Child Nutrition Programs, she understands the integral coordination that is necessary between school districts, non profit organizations, state and federal agencies and the food industry to successfully deliver programs that serve students and families.

Dr. Thornton has multi-faceted experience. She understands the importance of nutrition education and teaching healthy lifestyles, as well as the realities of managing budgets and food production systems. She also knows through experience that USDA nutrition programs depend on the U.S. food and agriculture sector to provide safe, fresh, and nutritious products to students and consumers.

The dairy industry appreciates how she has helped to improve the quality of milk that is provided

in schools nationwide as a board member of the Milk Processor Education Program (Milk PEP).  
I believe she would be a great asset to USDA Secretary nominee Vilsack, and to the nation's children and families and the institutions who serve them.

My best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Connie Tipton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Connie Tipton  
President and CEO

Cc: Ms. Neera Tanden  
Mr. Aaron Pickrell