

**Comments to the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services
Regarding the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Report**

From the International Dairy Foods Association

March 24, 2015

Good morning; thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. I am Michelle Matto, a Registered Dietitian presenting on behalf of the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA).

IDFA represents 550 dairy foods companies and suppliers within a \$125-billion a year industry. These organizations range from large multinational organizations to single-plant companies, and they represent more than 85 percent of the milk, cultured products, cheese, ice cream and frozen desserts produced and marketed in the United States.

We agree with the report's conclusion that "the vast majority of the U.S. population does not meet recommended intakes for ... dairy food[s]." The report also stated that milk, yogurt and other dairy foods provide three of the nutrients of concern: calcium, vitamin D, and potassium, and that consumption of dairy is associated with lower risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity. We therefore believe that it's vitally important that the Dietary Guidelines maintain its emphasis on the importance of consuming three servings of dairy every day.

The Dietary Guidelines should encourage consumption of nutrient dense foods, like milk, yogurt and cheese, including those that contain some added sugars, sodium or saturated fat. Milk's important contribution to the diet was highlighted when the report compared eating plans that include milk and those where milk has been replaced with other beverages-- diets without the milk were lower in a number of essential nutrients, including the nutrients of concern calcium, vitamin D and potassium.

Processors of all dairy products, including fluid milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream, have expended significant resources working to improve the nutrient profile of these products while maintaining products that are enjoyed by consumers and still function in the way that they expect. Milk, yogurt and ice cream manufacturers have lowered the fat and sugars in their products. Cheesemakers have reduced fat and sodium. There are a wide variety of dairy products that can meet the nutritional and lifestyle needs of all Americans.

The DGAC report makes a number of recommendations for improving the diets of Americans. However, the significant job remains to translate these findings into actionable, positive messages that individuals and families can use to guide their everyday food choices. We urge the agencies to adopt clear messages that people can use when planning meals or shopping in the grocery store, such as: "Select 3 servings of dairy each day."

We believe messages such as these will help Americans make better food choices and move toward healthier eating patterns, such as those including 3 servings of dairy each day. We appreciate this opportunity to speak today and will submit written comments.