



Making a Difference for Dairy

IDFA's Oral Comments at FDA Horizontal Approaches to Food Standards of Identity Modernization Public Meeting – September 27, 2019

Good afternoon. I am Cary Frye, Senior Vice President of Regulatory Affairs at the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), a trade association representing the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industry, which supports more than 3 million jobs that generate \$159 billion in wages and \$620 billion in overall economic impact.

Milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream and dairy ingredient companies are proud to manufacture and market a wide range of safe, nutritious and affordable dairy products that meet consumer demands for innovative new products.

However, dairy products represent a third of the 280 federal food standards of identity, and these standards are significantly outdated and stand in the way of using new technologies, ingredients, and novel processes for dairy foods. Dairy product manufacturers want the flexibility to meet consumer demand, take advantage of innovations in manufacturing and technology, and produce more nutritious foods. That is why we commend FDA for undertaking this meeting to consider horizontal approaches for modernizing food and dairy standards of identity.

The dairy industry has submitted or signed on to numerous petitions requesting flexibility in the dairy standards. Some of these are still pending decades later. Clearly a new approach is needed to allow dairy processors greater flexibility to create innovative, nutritious, and healthful products that meet consumer demands.

As provided in previous written comments, IDFA and our members believe that a horizontal approach to food standards modernization is the best solution. We continue to endorse the concept presented in the 2006 citizen petition submitted by the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), IDFA and ten other food industry trade associations as the best path forward. The petition included six categories of flexibility to be applied on a horizontal basis to all food standards. These six principles would accommodate many of the changes that the dairy and food industry are seeking in standards modernization such as:

1. Addition of ingredients intended solely for technical, nondistinctive effects, such as emulsifiers, stabilizers, preservatives or the addition of mold inhibitors to all types of cheese;
2. Use of safe and suitable flavors and flavor enhancers in foods; use of safe and suitable ingredients such as salt substitutes for lower sodium cheese, or non-nutritive sweeteners to make lower sugar flavored milks and yogurt;
3. Use of advanced technologies to produce ingredients provided the finished food retains the essential characteristics of the standardized product, i.e. use of ultrafiltered and microfiltered milk in cheese making and other dairy products;

4. Use of the “alternate make” procedures allowed in cheese to apply for all foods that would permit technologies other than heat treatment or “pasteurization” like high pressure processing used to prevent spoilage of milk products;
5. Changes to product’s basic shape; and
6. Improvements in nutritional properties that do not rise to the level of a defined nutrient content claim, such as being able to increase protein by grams rather than a minimum of 10% more than the daily value.

Rather than petitioning for individual standard changes that may take decades, food standards require and deserve regulatory clarity and certainty. That is why we fully support undertaking a holistic approach to modernizing food standards that maintains the basic nature of the food while allowing for innovation. In our view, a horizontal approach for standards modernization would benefit consumers and the industry.

We look forward to providing more detailed written comments to the Agency.

Thank you.