



IDFA Cheese Board Meeting

Thursday, November 12, 2020 | 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. ET

Presiding: Louie Gentine, Chair, IDFA Cheese Board

IDFA Staff Liaisons:

J. David Carlin, Senior Vice President, Legislative Affairs and Economic Policy

Joe Scimeca, Senior Vice President, Scientific and Regulatory Affairs

Meeting Notes

I. Welcome and Roll Call

Michael Dykes welcomed members of the IDFA Cheese Board to the meeting. The following members were in attendance:

Officers

Chair **Louie P. Gentine**, *Chief Executive Officer*, Sargento Foods Inc.

Directors

Troy Ammann, *Vice President, Cheese Sales*, Agropur U.S. Operations

Michael L. Brown, *Director of Dairy Supply Chain*, The Kroger Co.

Patrick Criteser, *President and CEO*, Tillamook County Creamery Association

Kurt Epprecht, *Owner/Vice President, Cheese Quality & Dairy Policy*, Great Lakes Cheese Co., Inc.

Jeff Gentine, *President & CEO*, Masters Gallery Foods, Incorporated

Kim Parks, *Vice President & General Manager, Dairy Food Ingredients*, Dairy Farmers of America

IDFA Executive Council Members

David Ahlem, *CEO & President*, Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc.

Terry Brockman, *President & COO, U.S. Division*, Saputo Cheese USA Inc.

IDFA Staff

Dave Carlin

Michael Dykes

Donald Grady

Danielle Quist

Becky Rasdall

Heather Soubra

Josie Wagler

II. Process Verified Program (PVP) Discussion

On November 12, the Cheese Segment Board convened for a follow-up discussion regarding strategies to preserve the ability of US cheese makers to use the term “natural cheese” on their packaging. Dave Carlin updated the board on the current status of the CURD Act, IDFA’s proposed legislation to codify a definition of “natural cheese” in federal statute. Becky Rasdall then provided

an overview of a complementary initiative - a process verified program (PVP) overseen by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of USDA. After providing a history of PVPs within AMS, noting that AMS has not undertaken a PVP for dairy before, the parameters of a possible natural cheese PVP were discussed, including pre-requisites, audit scope and frequency, branding and specification development, and process for PVP development. There was lengthy discussion, with board members asking for clarifying details about program pre-requisites and which parts of the supply chain might be audited by AMS if participating in a program. One member opposed the PVP proposal, while other members were open to it, but all agreed more details were needed before a vote could be taken, such as:

- What part of the supply chain would be audited by AMS, e.g. cheese manufacturers or converters?
- Would participation in the USDA plant survey program be a mandatory pre-requisite to the PVP, and if so, why?
- Could a PVP encompass multiple claims?
- What does AMS require to stop the PVP program if industry no longer wishes to continue it?

The discussion ended with Becky taking this list of questions from board members for follow-up with AMS, and plans to brief the board again with further information from AMS in the future.