

USDA's COVID-19 Stimulus – Food Purchases Listening Session

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Outline of Main Policy Points

Michael Dykes, DVM President & CEO

International Dairy Foods Association

1. I am honored to represent the International Dairy Foods Association during today's listening session. IDFA represents 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. IDFA's diverse membership ranges from multinational organizations to single-plant companies, from dairy companies and cooperatives to food retailers and suppliers, all on the cutting edge of innovation and sustainable business practices. Together, they represent 90 percent of the milk, cheese, ice cream, yogurt and cultured products, and dairy ingredients produced and marketed in the United States and sold throughout the world. I should also note that IDFA members, both large and small, procure milk from small, medium and large dairy farms across the country, and we are proud of the role we play in sustaining the rural economy.
2. My comments today will focus on how USDA should develop and implement a food purchase and distribution program to provide additional aid to nonprofits serving Americans in need of nutrition assistance. We encourage USDA to fully utilize the inherent "goodness" of dairy products in its efforts to "modernize our nutrition security and food security systems."
3. **Dairy products were a key part of the Farmers to Families Food Box Program and should remain a primary component of the new USDA food distribution program given dairy's unparalleled health and consumer benefits to people of all ages.**
 - a. Dairy is one of the core elements of the healthy dietary patterns recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
 - b. Dairy is a unique and nutritionally dense food group that is under-consumed by 90% of Americans overall according to the most recent version of the DGA, and this underconsumption is reflected in nearly all demographic groups
 - c. Including dairy products in the new food distribution program would also be consistent with other federal nutrition programs, including school meals and WIC, which all include nutrient-dense dairy in various forms.
4. **IDFA also recommends that USDA include a wide variety of dairy products from among all classes of milk in the new program.**
 - a. Providing different types of dairy products will broaden the appeal of the program to more Americans with different tastes and palates.
 - b. In addition, requiring a wide variety of dairy products will minimize the likelihood of market distortion.

5. **Finally, we would urge USDA to spread out dairy purchases over the expected life of the new program to minimize spikes in the dairy futures market that inevitably lead to increased market volatility.**
6. Thank you for the opportunity to present IDFA's views today. We will also submit more detailed written comments on the program to AMS.