



June 8, 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition & Forestry
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Oppose Sen. Rand Paul's (R-KY) Amendment No. 2180 permitting the interstate sale of raw milk.

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts:

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) respectfully urge that you oppose an amendment to legalize the interstate sale of unpasteurized or "raw" milk and milk products based on the significant public health risks associated with consumption of raw milk. Senator Paul's amendment (No. 2180) would allow the direct sale of raw milk and raw milk products, foods for which consumption has been opposed by every major health organization in the United States, including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Pasteurization is one of the greatest public health tools. To compromise or reduce its use through this legislation is not just bad politics – it's a huge, inhumane step backwards, and one that will cause sickness and death.

The link between raw milk and foodborne illness has been well-documented in the scientific literature, with evidence spanning nearly 100 years. Raw milk is a key vehicle in the transmission of human pathogens, including *E. coli* O157:H7, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *Salmonella*.

Based on a 2012 report¹ from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), between 1993 and 2006, unpasteurized dairy products resulted in 73 known outbreaks – causing 1,571 cases of foodborne illness, 202 hospitalizations, and 2 deaths. The CDC also concluded that unpasteurized milk was 150 times more likely to cause food-borne illness outbreaks than pasteurized milk, and such outbreaks had a hospitalization rate 13 times higher than those involving pasteurized dairy products.

¹ Langer, AJ, et al. Non-pasteurized dairy products, disease outbreaks, and state laws – United States, 1993-2006. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. 2012; 18(3):385.

The CDC has reported nearly 75% of raw milk-associated outbreaks have occurred in states where sale of raw milk was legal. Legalizing the interstate sale of raw milk in the United States increases the risk to public health, opening up the nation's consumers to the inevitable consequence of falling victim to a foodborne illness. No matter how carefully it is produced, raw milk is inherently dangerous. Americans have become ill after consuming raw milk obtained from farms of varying sizes, from cow-share programs, and from licensed, permitted, or certified raw milk producers.

One critical aspect of this high-profile issue is the tremendous amount of misinformation that has been disseminated regarding the supposed health benefits of raw milk. It is important to emphasize that no claim related to the health benefits of consuming raw milk has been substantiated by the medical literature. The scientific consensus is that raw milk can cause serious illnesses and hospitalizations, as well as can result in life-long negative health complications and death.

It is important to note that nearly two-thirds of all outbreaks associated with raw-milk or raw-milk products involve children. For example, in 2011, five children were infected with *E. coli* O157:H7 after drinking raw milk; three required hospitalization with hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a serious condition that may lead to kidney failure. It is the responsibility of our nation's leaders to make decisions to protect the health of the American public, most especially, those who are minors and are unable to make fully informed decisions that could have profound consequences for the rest of their lives.

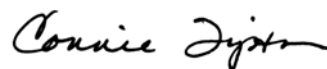
While consumer choice is an important value, it should not pre-empt public health and well-being. Legalizing the sale of raw milk and raw milk products to consumers, either through direct sale or through cow-share programs, represents an unnecessary risk to consumer safety. Therefore, we ask that you oppose Amendment No. 2180.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Jerry Kozak
President and CEO
National Milk Producers Federation



Connie Tipton
President and CEO
International Dairy Foods Association

The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's 30 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit www.nmpf.org for more information.

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), Washington, DC, represents the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industries and their suppliers, with a membership of 550 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 run more than 600 plant operations, and range 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. IDFA can be found online at www.idfa.org.