



DAIRY GROUPS APPLAUD DEFEAT OF RAW MILK AMENDMENT TO 2018 FARM BILL

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Overwhelming opposition from a strong coalition of dairy farmers, processors, consumer groups, food safety advocates, federal and state public health regulators, the medical community, and other key stakeholders led to the defeat today of an amendment to the 2018 House Farm Bill that would have allowed the interstate sale of unpasteurized milk.

Amendment 30, offered by Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY), would have removed existing regulations that prohibit the interstate sale of raw milk for direct human consumption – a development that the coalition of opponents said would have threatened the health of millions of Americans. The Massie amendment failed Friday in the House by a vote of 331 against to 79 in favor.

In a [May 14 letter](#) to House leaders Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) insisted that Massie’s proposed amendment to the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2) represented “an unnecessary risk to consumer safety and public health.”

“This amendment defies decades of proven food safety by removing requirements for pasteurization, which has been cited by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as one of the great achievements in public health in the 20th century,” said Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF.

In addition to opposition from NMPF and IDFA, strong letters of opposition to the amendment were also sent to House leadership by the [Safe Food Coalition](#) – a consumer group consortium consisting of the Center for Foodborne Illness, Research & Prevention; the Center for Science in the Public Interest; the Consumer Federation of America; the National Consumers League; STOP Foodborne Illness; and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The [National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments](#), a national food safety regulatory program that includes state milk regulatory agencies, dairy companies and FDA, also came out against the Massie measure, as did a [coalition](#) of 53 dairy cooperatives, state dairy associations and the American Association of Bovine Practitioners.

According to the dairy coalition letter, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that unpasteurized milk is 840 times more likely to cause foodborne illness than pasteurized milk, and nearly 75 percent of raw milk-associated outbreaks have occurred in states where the sale of raw milk was legal. Thus, the dairy groups argued, eliminating any regulations that stem the interstate sale of raw milk in the United States “would increase the risk to public health, exposing consumers nationwide to the inevitable consequence of falling victim to a foodborne illness.”

“Nationally, our dairy industry benefits from a very high degree of consumer confidence – confidence built in large part by the excellent food safety record of milk and dairy products,” said Michael Dykes, D.V.M., president and CEO of IDFA. “Legalizing and regulating the sale of raw milk sends a signal to consumers that drinking unpasteurized milk is safe when, in fact, the opposite is true.”

Current statistics estimate only 1-2 percent of reported foodborne outbreaks are attributed to dairy products. However, of those, more than 70 percent have been attributed to raw milk and inappropriately aged raw milk cheeses.

While this is the first time that Congress has debated changing federal laws to expand access to raw milk, NMPF and IDFA have worked for years to battle similar bills at the state level, including recent efforts in Tennessee, Virginia and Louisiana. NMPF and IDFA have long advocated against the consumption of raw milk and raw milk products because of the high risk of illness, as well as the potential for misinformation that could inappropriately tie raw milk health concerns to the safety of pasteurized dairy products.

“We greatly appreciate those who joined the current effort – from dairy producers, to dairy processors, state dairy regulators, consumer and food safety groups, state and local dairy organizations, the medical community, and veterinarians – and took a stand to oppose this irresponsible amendment that would have significantly compromised food safety,” said Mulhern.

Dykes added, “We appreciate the strong signal sent from the House of Representatives to raw milk advocates who could try to jeopardize public health in the future. We urge all legislators – at both the federal and state levels – who will face similar misguided efforts to follow the exemplary leadership demonstrated today by our nation’s representatives.”

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The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), 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 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF’s activities, visit our website at www.nmpf.org.

The International Dairy Foods Association, Washington, D.C., represents the nation’s dairy manufacturing and marketing industry, which supports nearly 3 million jobs, generates more than \$39 billion in direct wages and has an overall economic impact of more than \$200 billion. IDFA is the umbrella organization for the Milk Industry Foundation (MIF), the National Cheese Institute (NCI) and the International Ice Cream Association (IICA). IDFA’s members range from large multinational organizations to single-plant companies. Together they represent more than 85 percent of the milk,

cultured products, cheese, ice cream and frozen desserts produced and marketed in the United States and sold throughout the world. The diverse membership includes numerous food retailers, suppliers and companies that offer infant formula and a wide variety of milk-derived ingredients. Visit IDFA at www.idfa.org.

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