



News Release

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U.S. Dairy Industry Groups Urge Passage of Cuba Trade Bills *Legislation to Facilitate U.S. Agriculture Exports to Cuba Would Help Dairy Sales*

Arlington, VA – The National Milk Producers Federation and the U.S. Dairy Export Council applauded this week’s introduction of a Senate bill that would open travel by all Americans to Cuba and further facilitate U.S. agricultural exports to that nation.

The Promoting American Agriculture and Medical Exports to Cuba Act of 2009, S. 1089, was offered by Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) and 15 colleagues. Notably, the bill would clarify the “cash-in-advance” provision of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (TSREEA) to ensure its interpretation according to the original intent of Congress to allow for payment in a manner that did not impede trade while also not offering the extension of credit to Cuba. The legislation would also address other issues related to facilitating agricultural trade and travel to Cuba.

Original cosponsors of the Senate legislation include: Sens. Mike Crapo (R-ID), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Pat Roberts (R-KS), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Patty Murray (D-WA), Mark Pryor (D-AR), Christopher “Kit” Bond (R-MO), Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Rod Wyden (D-OR), Richard Lugar (R-IN), and Claire McCaskill (D-MO).

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“This bill would help to address administrative barriers that have arisen and negatively impact U.S. dairy exports to Cuba in a way unintended by Congress,” said Tom Suber, President of the U.S. Dairy Export Council. “The Cuban market holds significant promise for U.S. dairy exporters but has become increasingly difficult to supply within the past few years.”

“We believe that actions such as this legislation that serve to foster greater export opportunities for U.S. dairy products are the types of market building activities that our government should be working on in order to help expand the market for our dairy producers’ quality products,” said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of the National Milk Producers Federation.

The Senate legislation complements efforts in the House of Representatives through H.R. 1531, which was also introduced this spring. The House bill would also address issues important to U.S. dairy exports such as restoring the original intent of the TSREEA payment provisions.

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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 U.S. dairy producers and the cooperatives they collectively own. The members of NMPF’s 31 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of nearly 40,000 dairy producers of Capital Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF’s activities, visit www.nmpf.org.

The **U.S. Dairy Export Council** (USDEC) is a non-profit, independent membership organization that represents the export trade interest of U.S. milk producers, proprietary processors, dairy cooperatives, and export traders. Its mission is the enhance international demand for U.S. dairy products and assist the industry to increase the volume and value of exports. USDEC accomplishes this through market development programs that build overseas demand for U.S. dairy products, resolving market access barriers and advancing the industry’s trade policy goals. USDEC activities are supported by staff in Mexico, Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, South America, Middle East and Europe. Website: www.usdec.org.