Farmers Union Petitions FDA To Protect Definition Of Milk

WASHINGTON, D.C. — National Farmers Union dairy leaders recently delivered 3,398 petitions to the Food and Drug Administration urging the agency not to change the definition of milk.

The National Cheese Institute, Grocery Manufacturers of America, Inc., National Food Processors Association, and American Dairy Products Institute, recently filed petitions with the FDA requesting a revision of the definition of milk. The petitions request permission to use fluid ultrafiltered milk as an approved ingredient in standardized cheeses and other cheese products. Under FDA's current standard of identity regulations, fluid ultra-filtered milk is not an approved ingredient in more than 70 different cheeses.

National Farmers Union opposes allowing fluid ultra-filtered milk to be used as an ingredient in natural cheese and cheese products.

"Dairy farmers have worked to develop an identity of milk and dairy products as pure and wholesome in the eye of the American consumer," said NFU President Dave Frederickson. "Any change to the definition of milk would seriously compromise decades of work and investment by the nation's dairy farmers and quality cheese makers and would

be a serious deception to our nation's consumers."

According to the March 6, 2001, General Accounting Office report on ultra-filtered milk, separation by filtration results in a highly concentrated ultra-filtered milk that is not nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk. The study cites that most of the vitamins, minerals, enzymes, and lactose are removed through the filtration process.

Frederickson urged dairy farmers and consumers to submit comments to the FDA on the proposed definition change through National Farmers Union's Web site, www.nfu.org.

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