



**U.S. Dairy
Export Council.**

Ingredients | Products | Global Markets

**Comment to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Stakeholder Listening Session on strengthening World Health Organization preparedness and
response to health emergencies
Submitted August 18, 2021**

Introduction

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) thank the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the opportunity to provide written comments and participate in the August 18 listening session on the Member State working group on strengthening World Health Organization (WHO) preparedness and response to health emergencies.

NMPF 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. NMPF provides a forum through which dairy farmers and their cooperatives formulate policy on national issues that affect milk production and marketing. NMPF's contribution to this policy is aimed at improving the economic interests of dairy farmers, thus assuring the nation's consumers an adequate supply of pure, wholesome, and nutritious milk and dairy products.

USDEC is a non-profit, independent membership organization that represents the global trade interests of U.S. dairy producers, proprietary processors and cooperatives, ingredient suppliers and export traders. Dairy Management Inc. founded USDEC in 1995 and, through the dairy checkoff program, is the organization's primary funder.

Comments on strengthening WHO emergency preparedness and response

The National Milk Producers Federation and the U.S. Dairy Export Council fully support robust U.S. leadership at the World Health Organization to promote improved global public health outcomes, as well as to advance American public health, economic and foreign policy goals.

As producers of dairy products that nourish Americans and people around the world, the U.S. dairy industry has long championed science-based nutrition policy. Research continues to demonstrate the critical contributions to nutritious diets that milk, cheese, yogurt and other dairy products make, and our sector works hard to ensure that policies and guidelines take this information into account in recommendations pertaining to consumption of dairy.

Numerous dietary guidelines in the United States and globally recommend consumption of dairy as a leading source of critical nutrients, particularly for women, children, and aging and vulnerable populations. The WHO's work and policy recommendations have clear consequences for nutrition science and policy that impact dairy.

It is for that reason that NMPF and USDEC urge the U.S. government to ensure that a clear, proactive reform agenda strengthens WHO's ability to deliver transparent, inclusive, evidence-based outcomes grounded in the organization's core mission, mandated by member states, and fully consistent with international norms and standards.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical importance of prioritizing among public health objectives WHO's core work of emergency preparedness and response. Reforms that strengthen these core functions can also improve WHO's work in areas like nutrition and non-communicable diseases.

The U.S. dairy industry urges the United States to seek WHO reforms that reduce "mission creep" and increase the organization's transparency and accountability, member state oversight, openness to engagement with all stakeholders, use of science and evidence-based approaches, and adherence with best practices for regulatory transparency.

Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our thoughts on these vitally important matters. We thank HHS for continuing its practice of seeking public input on issues related to the World Health Organization, and we look forward to continued dialogue.

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