

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2010

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building  
1400 Independence Ave S.W. Room 200-A  
Washington D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We write you in response to the recent financial challenges facing the dairy industry. As you know, during 2009, dairy farms throughout the country experienced one of the worst price crises of the last 40 years. At the end of the year it appeared prices were finally climbing back to meet the cost of production, however, recent declines threaten the industry once again.

We appreciate all of the actions taken by the USDA in responding to the 2009 prices crisis. The restoration of DEIP, expedition of DELAP payments to farmers and removal of NFDM from storage were all necessary to aid the industry last year.

As a direct response to the recent collapse in cheese prices, we ask that the USDA use the Dairy Product Price Support Program (DDPSP) to increase support prices for cheddar block, barrel cheese and non-fat dried milk (NFDM). Any new drop in prices could deal a death blow to an industry on its way to recovery.

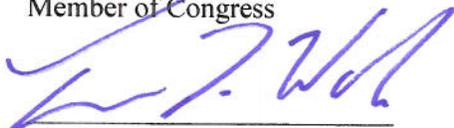
When the USDA raised the support price from August 1, 2009 through October 31, 2009, the "market" responded with an increase in prices. During the period of increased support prices the Commodity Credit Corporation was never called upon to purchase cheese at the increased prices. We believe the USDA could take the same action today, without incurring the costs of a purchase, while increasing market prices to aid dairy farms.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. An increase in the DPPSP could mean the difference between survival and bankruptcy for farms across the country this year.

Sincerely,



PETER WELCH  
Member of Congress



TIMOTHY WALZ  
Member of Congress



JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress



DEVIN NUNES  
Member of Congress

*Michael Arcuri*

MICHAEL ARCURI  
Member of Congress

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*Lynn Woolsey*

LYNN WOOLSEY  
Member of Congress