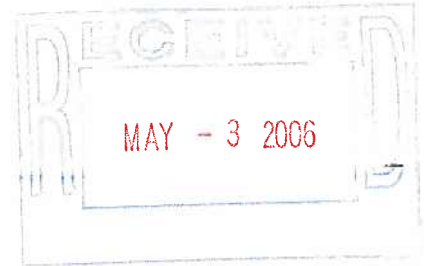


**Hoene Farms Inc.
Lois Hoene
16246 E 1800th Ave
Effingham, IL 62401
217-343-4790**

Whitney A. Rick
Chief, Promotion and Research Branch
USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs
STOP 0233--Room 2958-S
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-0233



Ms. Rick,

I would like the opportunity to express support for the continuation of the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board.

The National Dairy Board, working in close concert with the United Dairy Industry Association, is the only entity that truly represents all dairy producers in the United States, and is the only entity that concerns itself with creating dairy industry growth on behalf of all dairymen. As we continue to produce more and more milk each year, we need an industry force that can find a home for all that milk. That's the dairy board's mission, and here are just some of the successes the board has brought us:

- The "New Look of School Milk": School milk in plastic, resealable bottles is now being offered in 3,700 schools during the 2005-06 school year, compared to the roughly 400 schools that offered milk resealable plastic packaging during the 2003-2004 school year. With 38 processors on board, the program now reaches about 2.2 million students with cold, flavored milk in plastic, single-serve bottles on the school meal line.
- Better milk at McDonald's and Wendy's: Partnerships with McDonald's and Wendy's helped introduce white and chocolate milk in plastic resealable bottles in about 20,000 restaurants, resulting in combined weekly sales of 5.2 million units per week, compared to 690,000 units of milk in cardboard containers. Sonic Drive-Ins are about to roll out their new milk in plastic bottles, and Burger King plans to do the same this year.
- Federal Dietary Guidelines recommend 3 servings of dairy a day: Nutrition research funded by the checkoff and overseen by the National Dairy Board helped enhance dairy's position in government food recommendations from 2 to 3 servings per day in 2000 to a solid 3 servings in 2005, the first time dairy serving recommendations have changed in 20 years. These guidelines served as

the foundation for the dedicated dairy category supporting 3 servings a day in the Federal Food Guidance System. MyPyramid affects government feeding programs (including school feeding efforts) and guides health professionals as they provide nutrition information to their patients.

- 3-A-Day of Dairy: In 2003, the National Dairy Board helped launch 3-A-Day of Dairy, an industry-wide nutrition marketing initiative embraced by farmers, dairy processors and major retailers. Partners have spent millions of dollars promoting the benefits of consuming 3 servings of dairy a day (today, the typical American eats and drinks just over 1 ½ servings a day), and there is interest by other countries in using this theme as well.
- Connection demonstrated between dairy consumption and weight maintenance: Research overseen by the dairy board has clearly shown the positive impact dairy consumption can have on weight loss and management. To help increase public awareness of dairy's role in weight loss and weight management, the dairy checkoff launched an integrated national promotion that included retail promotions, TV and print advertising, public relations and Internet communications. The centerpiece of the program is a 3-A-Day of Dairy logo with the statement, "Burn more fat, lose weight."
- Pizza Hut introduces new cheesy menu items: The Dairy Board led efforts to help increase cheese use by partnering with national restaurant chains to introduce cheese-friendly items and drive innovation. Pizza Hut, the nation's number one pizza chain, featured several new cheese-friendly items that the dairy checkoff helped to develop and promote. The latest is "Cheesy Bites," a new pizza that was introduced during this year's Super Bowl. Farmers spent about \$45,000 in total to help make these new items happen, and Pizza Hut has spent tens of millions to promote their products - and our cheese.
- Wendy's introduces new yogurt: In addition to milk, Wendy's also worked with the National Dairy Board to test and market a 7-ounce strawberry yogurt cup that is now a permanent menu option. This introduction helped lead to a 7 million pound annual increase in milk used through foodservice.
- Action for Healthy Kids: The checkoff founded and is a leading sponsor of Action for Health Kids (AFHK), the only national organization dedicated to addressing childhood nutrition and physical activity in our nation's schools. This fall, dairy council staff partnered with AFHK and the National Football League® to introduce local school districts to "ReCharge!" an after-school program that includes physical activity and healthy snacking, including dairy, to students across the country.
- Issues and crisis management: To help build and maintain the image of dairy products and dairy producers among the public, the dairy checkoff staff, along with National Milk Producers Federation, U.S. Dairy Export Council, and International Dairy Foods Association, lead an industry-wide issues management system to diffuse potentially negative issues including: on-farm security, dairy nutrition concern, and legal challenges from special interest

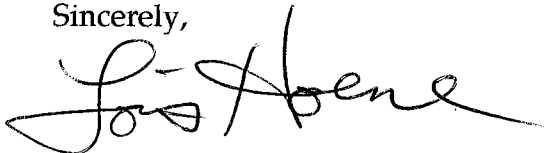
groups. In addition, crisis preparation efforts include nationwide drills, spokesperson training, and outreach with industry and government agencies. This system is the envy of other commodity promotion and research programs.

None of these could have happened without the National Dairy Board and the dairy promotion checkoff. The Dairy Board oversees a farmer-funded, farmer-controlled, self-help program that is invaluable to our industry. It is invaluable because it focuses today on increasing sales and building demand - not just making ads. The Dairy Board today is stronger than ever and brings more value to dairy producers than ever before.

As I once heard a dairy producer say about the checkoff, "It's the best bargain on our ledger."

Please accept my strong support for the continuation of the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lois Hoene". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "L" and "H".

Lois Hoene
Dairy Farmer