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September 29, 2006

United States Department of Agriculture
AMS/Dairy Programs
STOP 0231-Room 2971
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0231

Fax: 202-690-0552

Dear USDA:

I am writing to you because I have been informed that USDA is asking "interested parties" to submit proposals and ideas concerning pricing Class III and IV milk. I am definitely an "interested party" because I am a dairy farmer and I need a better method than is currently being used to determine the price I am paid for my milk.

In the current milk pricing formulas, which have been in place since Federal Order Reform was implemented in 2000, no consideration has been given to dairy farmers' cost of production. It is unfair to price farmers' milk without directly considering the farmers' cost to produce the milk in the first place. I have no degree in economics, but I sure know when I am being ripped off, and the current milk pricing methods are a farce at best, and, more accurately, they are highway robbery.

The federal law under the 608(c)18 provision of the 1937 Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act (AMAA) MANDATES that the farmers' cost of production be considered in any milk pricing formula. Federal Judge William Sessions ordered that this be done when the Federal Order Reform came under review in his court in 1999. This law and the judge's order are still being ignored by USDA in its current milk pricing methodology. USDA's failure to price the farmers' milk fairly has caused tremendous suffering for our farmers and irreparable harm to America's dairy farming communities, including our essential support businesses. This chronic economic abuse of dairy farmers not only ruins our rural societies but also jeopardizes the milk supply of American consumers.

It is my hope that USDA will take this opportunity to correct the outrageous miscarriage of justice that has been-- and continues to be-- perpetrated against dairy farmers like me by USDA when it does not consider the farmers' cost of production in milk pricing formulas.

Sincerely


Joseph Cochran