

St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc.
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Whitney A. Rick
Chief, Promotion and Research Branch
USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs
STOP 0233 – Room 2958-S
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-0233

Dear Whitney Rick:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Section 610 Review of the National Dairy Promotion and Research Program (Federal Register Vol. 71, No. 3; February 28, 2006, Page 9978-9979 [Docket No. DA-06-04]).

St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc. represents and works on behalf of dairy farmers in the States of Vermont, New Hampshire and New York. We currently have over 500 members that produce nearly 1.3 billion pounds of milk on an annual basis.

The dairy checkoff is paid for by dairy farmers for dairy farmers. Farmers contribute to the national program and typically to a state or regional program through a credit on the assessment. It has been my experience over the last 20 years that the check off works effectively as a national program and on the state or regional level. We have had Board members and dairy farmers serve on the Vermont Dairy Promotion Council, New England Dairy Promotion Board, National Dairy Promotion and Research Board and Dairy Management, Inc. The experiences have been positive and supportive of the efforts of these organizations.

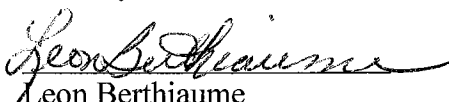
The program requires the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conduct a referendum to terminate the checkoff when ten percent of producers subject to the Order request the referendum. The fact that no producer-requested referendum has occurred demonstrates the great support which the dairy checkoff program enjoys among producers of all sizes.

The assessment is collected by us as the Cooperative therefore recordkeeping and other requirements incumbent upon the farmer are minimized. We have had no issues with the remittance process.

Congress authorized the establishment of the dairy checkoff pursuant to its policy of supporting and strengthening dairy profitability and the dairy industry's position in the marketplace. I believe that the dairy checkoff contributes effectively to dairy profitability and has minimal impact on small producers and other entities which the 610 review is aimed at.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Leon Berthiaume
General Manager

Certified to ISO 9001-2000

