

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington DC 20250

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Perdue and Secretary Azar,

We write to you today out of concern for the latest actions by the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee regarding full-fat dairy products. As members of the Wisconsin delegation, we have the pleasure of representing thousands of hard-working dairy farmers who pride themselves on the high-quality, nutritious, and affordable foods they produce to provide a vital dietary staple for families across the nation. Since 2010, however, some of our dairy farmers' most nutrient rich products have been banned from school lunch programs across the country.

Since 1980, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) have become the principal policy guiding nutrition in the United States. The DGA has an enormous influence on American eating habits and is required by law to be updated every five years. The advice given to every American from doctors, nutritionists, dietitians, and other health care professionals and professional associations comes directly from the Guidelines, influencing hospital and institutional nutrition programs, as well as feeding programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Women, Infants, and Children program.

We are concerned that the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) did not fairly or seriously consider a massive body of recent science-based research showing that longstanding caps on saturated fats are not supported by science. This includes large, government-funded studies on more than 75,000 people, demonstrating that saturated fats have no effect on cardiovascular or total mortality. The 2020 DGAC relied instead on reviews conducted in 2015 and 2010, which were deemed by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) to be unsystematic and, therefore, unreliable.

It is time to lift the ban on saturated fats to allow the choice of whole milk back into our schools. Full-fat dairy products provide a nutrient-dense complete source of protein full of healthy fats our bodies need to promote a healthy weight and fend off chronic disease. Updating the policies on saturated fats and full-fat dairy products will not only benefit recipients of government feeding programs, including our children in schools across the country, but also our nation's dairy farmers and the rural economies they support by providing the potential to increase domestic demand for the healthy, wholesome milk they produce.

Due to the questions posed after the last round of updates to the DGA in 2015, Congress mandated the first ever third-party review of the process by the prestigious NASEM at a cost of \$1,000,000. The NASEM report was issued in September 2017, providing a list of recommendations to fix the broken system, yet the 2020 DGAC has not adopted the majority of the recommendations. Americans deserve full transparency on the recommendations provided by NASEM and the proposed changes deserve a fair and full consideration by the 2020 DGAC.

The dietary recommendations that determine much of what Americans consume must be based on the most up to date research from an unbiased team of advisors. We ask that you work to ensure the publication of the DGA is updated to include the most recent scientific evidence on the benefits of saturated fats. We ask your office to review and address the flawed process and implement the recommendations from the NASEM.

We appreciate your work to ensure Americans are healthy and that those who produce our food are able to do so for years to come.

Sincerely,



Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress