



Important ACS Member Update

March 8, 2011

Representatives from the American Cheese Society (ACS) met with Food & Drug Administration (FDA) staff at the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) offices to be briefed on the progress of the Center's Risk Profile for raw milk cheese as well as current compliance efforts.

ACS leaders and members in attendance were: Dr. Cathy Donnelly, Vermont Institute of Artisan Cheese; David Gremmels, Rogue Creamery; Christine Hyatt, ACS President; Mateo Kehler, Jasper Hill Farm; and Nora Weiser, ACS Executive Director.

At the moment, the FDA is not considering changes to any rules or regulations pertaining to aging. Their focus is predominantly on the process of developing a scientifically-based Risk Profile which can then be used to inform any future changes.

A Risk Profile has been drafted, and it is heading into peer review. The FDA hopes to publish a draft for public comment by the end of this calendar year. ACS, its members, and the public will have a chance to review the Risk Profile once the draft is published for public comment. It is scientifically-based and incorporates all of the latest research on raw milk cheese from the US and internationally. Below is the timeline for this process:

- 1) 3-4 weeks for draft to go through peer review
- 2) Hope to publish final, peer-reviewed draft by end of 2011 calendar year
- 3) Public comment period could be 60-120 days with 90 days as an average
- 4) Finalizing the Risk Profile for publication by the middle of 2012 calendar year
- 5) If final Risk Profile points to any need for rule making or changing, that would not begin until 2013, and then it would be many more years for any new rule to be drafted, reviewed, approved, and ultimately implemented.

FDA feels it is important to share openly with stakeholders, and national trade associations are a part of this sharing because education and dissemination of information are an important piece of the equation. They were encouraged by ACS position statements and understand our willingness and desire to be a part of the process.

ACS has invited FDA representative(s) to attend our conference in Montreal, and looks forward to having courteous and respectful dialogue with any representatives who join us as attendees or presenters.

ACS has been invited back for a future meeting with the FDA as the process moves forward.