



Cheese Makers Unite To Address Sodium In Cheese

by Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy

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Rosemont, Ill. — This December, hosted by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy™, more than 17 leading cheese companies and manufacturers united at a Best Practices Task Force meeting to work on proactively addressing the opportunities and challenges associated with reducing sodium content in cheese. The group has been working pre-competitively to improve consumers' health and wellness while maintaining strict expectations for food safety and taste.

The group rallied around three important aspects related to the challenge of sodium levels in cheese products: maintaining taste and functionality in lower sodium products, updating process controls in manufacturing, and educating key audiences about the necessary role of sodium in cheese — in terms of the cheese making process and food safety/shelf stability.

“Cheese contributes a relatively small amount of sodium to Americans’ diets, less than 8 percent; however, industry is steadfast in its commitment to being part of the solution to lowering sodium levels in the diet. Innovation efforts are under way that help the industry control and lower sodium,” said Nigel Kirtley, vice president cheese research, development and quality for Kraft Foods and member of the Health and Wellness Subcommittee for the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. “It should not be overlooked that cheese is a nutritious food that contributes calcium, protein, phosphorus and vitamin A to the diet, and it is a nice complement to other food groups that Americans need to be eating more of such as whole grains, vegetables and fruit,” said Kirtley.

To date, companies involved in the Best Practices Task Force included: Bongards, Cargill, Chr. Hansen, Inc., Dairy Farmers of America, Inc., Davisco Foods, Foremost Farms, Glanbia, Great Lakes Cheese, Kraft Foods, Kroger, Lactalis, Land O’Lakes, Leprino, Marathon Cheese, Sargento, Schreiber Foods and V&V Supremo Foods. Additionally, academic researchers from Utah State University, University of Wisconsin’s Center for Dairy Research and Food Research Institute, California Polytechnic State University and representatives from International Dairy Foods Association and U. S. Dairy Export Council also participated.

The group will continue to work together to address three areas — ensuring food safety, education outreach and process control.

U.S. cheese makers are dedicated to helping Americans live healthier lifestyles by working toward progress together; seeking collaborations with researchers, public health and health professional experts; and recognizing the importance of leading by example through safe and nutritious innovations that meet consumers' needs.

Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy is a volunteer based forum for the dairy industry to work together pre-competitively to address barriers and opportunities to foster innovation and increase sales. The Innovation Center aligns the collective resources of the industry to offer consumers nutritious dairy products and ingredients, and promote the health of people, communities, the planet and the industry. The Board of Directors for the Innovation Center includes 31 leaders representing 30 key U.S. producer organizations, dairy cooperatives, processors, manufacturers and brands. The Innovation Center is staffed by Dairy Management Inc.TM Visit USDairy.com for more information about the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.

Source: Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy