



**Department of  
Agriculture**

Governor John R. Kasich • Lt. Governor Mary Taylor  
Director James Zehringer

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July 14, 2011

The Honorable Jon Leibowitz  
Chairman, Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20580

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the Ohio Department of Agriculture, I am writing to express my concern regarding the Interagency Working Group's recent proposal, "Preliminary Proposed Nutrition Principles to Guide Industry Self-Regulatory Efforts." In developing these recommendations, it appears that the Interagency Working Group did not examine the economic impact that such a proposal would have on the entire food and beverage supply chain, including agriculture.

Agriculture is Ohio's number one industry, employing 1 out of every 7 Ohioans and contributing more than \$107 billion to the state's economy. In addition, Ohio is home to more than 1,000 food processing facilities that employ over 60,000 workers. Ohio ranks in the top five states in the production of beverages; fruits, vegetables and specialty foods; bakery products; and tortillas. We are the top producer of Swiss cheese in the United States, and rank second in eggs and third in tomatoes used for processing. Food processing and agriculture is essential to our state.

While we share your concerns about childhood obesity, the overly stringent nature of the nutrition guidelines would prevent many healthy food products from being advertised and marketed to children and adolescents up to the age of 18, including many dairy products like cheese, yogurt and fluid milk (other than skim and 1%), most cereals, many whole grain breads, and even a wide variety of canned vegetables. In fact, many of these same products meet the FDA definition of "healthy."

Ohio farmers produce more than 200 products, including corn, winter wheat, tomatoes, mushrooms, maple syrup, and honey. Ohio is also home to thousands of beef, poultry, and hog producers. The reason Ohio is one of the top states in the U.S. for food processing is due to the diversity of products that are grown and raised in state. If food companies sell less at the grocery store, producers in Ohio will inevitably feel the impact as well.

The economic impact to food processors and agricultural producers in Ohio – and throughout the U.S. – would be significant. Our mission at ODA is to provide a safe, wholesome and affordable food supply, while creating economic opportunities for Ohio's farmers, food processors and agribusinesses. This proposal clearly does not accomplish any of those objectives, and as such, I respectfully ask that your agency withdraw it and consider a more reasonable approach.

Sincerely, 

James J. Zehringer  
Director, Ohio Department of Agriculture



*Serving Farmers and Protecting Consumers Since 1846*



cc: The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture\

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services

The Honorable Margaret Hamburg  
Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration

Senator Rob Portman

Speaker John Boehner

Representative Steve Austria

Representative Steve Chabot

Representative Bob Gibbs

Representative Bill Johnson

Representative Jim Jordan

Representative Marcy Kaptur

Representative Bob Latta

Representative Jean Schmidt

Representative Steve Stivers

Representative Patrick Tiberi

Representative Michael Turner

