

AUG 18 2005

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
United States Senate  
230 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-3703

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letter of July 28, 2005, to Secretary Johanns, cosigned by Senator Gordon H. Smith, expressing your opposition to findings made by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) concerning the regulatory status of certain producer-handlers in the Pacific Northwest and Arizona-Las Vegas milk marketing areas. The Secretary has asked me to respond on his behalf.

USDA appreciates the importance of the issues discussed in your letter regarding the regulatory status of producer-handlers in Federal milk marketing orders. The comment period on the recommended decision closed on June 13, 2005. Please be assured that we will consider your comments carefully before a final decision is issued.

Thank you for your interest in the Federal milk marketing order program.

Sincerely,

/s/

Bill Hawks  
Under Secretary  
Marketing and Regulatory Programs

IDENTICAL LETTER SENT TO:

The Honorable Gordon H. Smith  
United States Senate  
404 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510