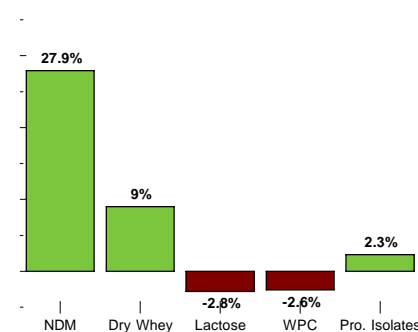




CHEESE REPORTER

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Percentage Change in Production of Selected Products
November 2007 vs. November 2006



FDA Says Milk From Cloned Cows Is Safe; Marketing Moratorium Remains

FDA Decides No Special Labeling Needed; Dairy Groups Back Continuation Of Voluntary Moratorium

Washington—The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Tuesday said it has concluded, after years of study, that milk and meat from clones of cattle, and their offspring, are as safe to eat as food from conventionally bred animals.

In response to FDA's announcement, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) encouraged the cloning industry to continue its voluntary moratorium on putting cloned products into the food chain for a sufficient period of time to prepare so that a smooth and seamless transition into the marketplace can occur.

Both the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) and the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) said they supported USDA's request that the cloning industry continue its voluntary moratorium on marketing products from cloned animals.

FDA said it is not requiring labeling or any other additional measures

for food from cattle, goat or swine clones, or their offspring, because food derived from these sources is no different from food derived from conventionally bred animals.

Should a producer express a desire for voluntary labeling (such as "this product is clone-free"), it will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the labeling is truthful and not misleading, FDA indicated.

Because clones would be used for breeding, they would not be expected to enter the food supply in any significant number. Instead, their sexually reproduced offspring would be used for producing milk and meat for the marketplace.

An animal clone, FDA explained, is a genetic copy of a donor animal, similar to an identical twin, but born at a different time. Due to their cost and rarity, clones are intended to be used as elite breeding animals to introduce desirable traits into herds more rapidly than would be possible using conventional breeding.

FDA actually issued three documents on animal cloning outlining the agency's regulatory approach: a risk assessment; a risk management plan; and guidance for industry.

The three documents were originally released in draft form in December 2006. Since that time, the risk assessment has been updated to include new scientific information; FDA said that new information reinforces the food safety conclusions of the drafts.

The risk assessment concluded that milk and meat from clones of cattle, goats and swine, and food from the sexually reproduced offspring of clones, are as safe to eat as food from conventionally bred animals. The assessment was peer-reviewed by a group of independent scientific experts in cloning and animal health, FDA said.

One chapter of the risk assessment focuses on food safety concerns, and assumes that any clones or their products would be subject to the same local, state and federal laws and regulations as conventional food animals or their products.

The primary concern for milk and meat from animal clones is that inappropriate reprogramming of the nucleus of donor cells does not result in epigenetic changes creating subtle

• See **Clones Get FDA's OK**, p. 6

Global Dairy Markets Expected To Remain Tight In 2008; Most Prices Seen Retreating, But Cheese Prices Showing Resiliency

Washington—The global dairy outlook for 2008 "points to relatively tight markets as exports of major dairy commodities are not expected to expand significantly while demand is likely to at least remain stable," according to *Dairy: World Markets and Trade*, released this week by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

The question for 2008 is where global dairy prices will settle, the report noted. Not unexpectedly, following such a "sharp spike" in 2007, skimmed milk powder (SMP) markets "appear to be in a correction phase," and prices will probably settle around \$3,000 per ton to \$4,000 per ton.

Whole milk powder (WMP) and butterfat prices "also appear to be retreating, while cheese prices are showing some resiliency underscoring strong demand," the report added.

Generally, dairy product demand in 2008 "should remain strong," particularly in Asia, where gross domestic product (GDP) growth is forecast to grow by 5 to 6 percent. The competitive edge the US has capitalized on as a result of a weakening US dollar is expected to continue.

Among major trading nations, cheese exports are expected to remain strong in 2008, with only Australia showing any significant decline. Australian cheese exports are expected to fall 7 percent, reflecting the drought-impacted drop in milk production.

New Zealand's cheese exports are also forecast to fall by 1 percent, but FAS said this is more a reflection of the low level of available exportable stocks; cheese production is expected to increase by 7 percent.

In the European Union (EU), high world cheese prices are expected to lead to a substantial gain of exports to reach 635,000 tons, a 6 percent increase from estimated

• See **World Dairy Markets**, p. 9

Consumer Dairy Prices Fell Slightly In December, But Jumped 13.4% In 2007

Washington—The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for dairy products was 205.299 (1982-84=100) in December, down 0.3 percent from November but 13.4 percent higher than in December 2007, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported Wednesday.

For all of 2007, the CPI for dairy products averaged an record high 194.77, up 7.3 percent from 2006's average and 6.8 percent higher than the previous record high average of 182.4, set in 2005.

The overall CPI rose 4.1 percent in 2007 and ended the year at 210.036. That was actually down 0.1 percent from November.

The food index advanced 4.9 percent in 2007, its largest increase since a 5.3 percent rise in 1990, and ended the year at 206.704. Grocery store food prices increased 5.6 percent in 2007 and ended the year at 205.208.

• See **Record Dairy CPI**, p. 13

Will Certified Humane, Animal Welfare Labels Become Dairy's Next 'Organic?'

Madison—As more cheese makers work to achieve humanely-produced certification, some worry the trend will become as sweeping as organics and therefore, less valid and useful as a marketing strategy.

Those cheese and dairy manufacturers that have already earned certification testify that the process was relatively easy and despite extra paperwork, many already met criteria set by certifying agencies.

Along with a prevailing philosophy of treating animals humanely, certified manufacturers are answering a call by customers that want to know where their food is coming from and how the animals are treated.

Adele Douglass, executive director of Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC), expects certified humane labeling to follow or surpass the organic trend in terms of growth.

"It's taken the organic label decades to become more mainstream, while products with the

Certified Humane label are already on the shelves in grocery stores across the country after only five years," Douglass said.

Certifying Agencies

A registered trademark of HFAC, the "Certified Humane" label has been awarded to more than 60 companies since the program was unveiled in May 2003. The label assures consumers that a dairy product has been produced according to HFAC standards for humane farm animal treatment.

Specifically, animals must receive a nutritious diet without antibiotics or hormones and must be raised with shelter, resting areas and space sufficient to support natural behavior. Producer compliance with HFAC standards is verified through annual on-site visits by third-party inspectors.

We haven't seen a big trend in

• See **Humane Labeling**, p. 8

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dairy yet, Douglass said. However, we've had inquiries in the last six months from large producers who are interested in the Certified Humane label.

"Sometimes it takes a while to go from inquiry to action, but the foundation has been laid," she said. "One of the problems we have with recruiting dairies is that many dairy farms in the East have tie stalls, and we only allow free stalls."

Shelburne Farms of Shelburne, VT, is the state's first HFAC-certified cheesemaking facility. It was philosophy more than marketing which led the farm to apply for HFAC certification, said Scott Buckingham, director of farm products for Shelburne Farms.

"The HFAC certification is particularly meaningful to us as we have made the intentional decision not to manage our herd in strict compliance with certified organic criterion," Buckingham said.

HFAC certification provides a way for us to highlight and promote our agricultural stewardship practices outside of the organic footprint, he said.

"Organic – specifically the ability to treat ill or injured cows with medicine – is trickier for livestock management and production than it is for fruit and vegetable production," Buckingham continued.

Launched in 1998, the Food Alliance is a nonprofit organization that certifies farms and food handlers for sustainable agricultural and production practices. Currently, there are more than 270 Food Alliance certified farms and ranches in 17 US states, Canada and Mexico.

Last October, Cedar Grove Cheese of Plain, WI, was the first food processor in the Midwest to

meet sustainable practices established by Food Alliance. Owner Bob Wills said his primary motivation for animal welfare certification is buyer concern.

"Many of our customers have expressed concern about the treatment of animals and quality of milk produced in confinement operations and with the use of genetically modified growth hormones," Wills said.

"Recent news coverage of controversies involving large-scale organic farms has made consumers aware that the organic rules do not adequately cover animal treatment," he said.

"We felt it was best to get a certification in order to set a standard. Otherwise, we would have everybody sending us lists of things they would like to see done."

Bob Laffranchi,
Loleta Cheese Company

"If we want to talk about sustainability, we have to go beyond organic," Wills said. "Food Alliance gives us that."

Thirteen dairy farms were also certified for standards that include labor conditions, humane animal treatment, and conservation of soil and water, enabling them to supply Cedar Grove with milk for Food Alliance certified cheese.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) provided financial support to help the dairy farms and Cedar Grove achieve certification through its Value Added Dairy Initiative grant program.

Another accreditation program is the Animal Welfare Institute's

(AWI) "Animal Welfare Approved," which is designed to ensure that food products are coming from farms that meet specific standards for animal welfare.

Every AWA farm is an independent family farm, and farmers must adhere to standards for all animals of an approved species – no split or dual production is permitted. The program, offered free of charge to farmers, is helping family farmers renew a connection to the health of their animals – something that has been lost in industrial factory farming, AWI reported.

Hassle-Free Certification Process

Trent Hendricks, owner of Hendricks Farms & Dairy, LLC of Telford, PA, said the process of achieving HFAC certification last summer was simple and hassle-free.

We just got inspected and met all criteria, Hendricks said.

"When we increased off-farm sales we thought that a certification would help make folks more sympathetic to our brand; turns out, we didn't need it," Hendricks said.

The decision to obtain a humanely manufactured label, said fourth generation owner Joby Rumiano of Rumiano Cheese Company, Crescent City, CA, was initiated in order to add the premium products profile of certifying agencies.

"I chose the American Humane Association as the certifier because of its 131 years of service protecting children and animals here in the US," Rumiano said.

Realizing that the paperwork would be extensive, Rumiano said the company required all organic milk producers to have American Humane certification prior to shipping. The process took between six and eight months for the paperwork to go through, and initial dairy assessments took between three and

four hours per dairy over three inspection dates.

"The biggest obstacles were getting all of the paperwork done correctly and in on time, as well as working out scheduling so that all of the inspections would take place without wasting a lot of time traveling from dairy to dairy," Rumiano said.

While the HFAC certification process took just a few weeks, Maureen Reagan, sales manager with Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy of Longmont, CO, agreed that the primary challenge in achieving certification was making time to complete the application, which is "very well thought out and covers all aspects of animal care for a food production farm."

Our dairy has employed herd management practices supporting humane animal care since its inception in 1989, Reagan said. Our end product – artisan goat cheese – depends on high-quality milk from healthy, happy goats.

However, we wanted to be a Certified Humane operation so we could have official validation for our efforts and practices, she continued.

Bob Laffranchi, owner and president of Loleta Cheese Company, Loleta, CA, said that because neighboring dairies surrounding Loleta Cheese were becoming certified, he made the decision to likewise earn humane certification from the American Humane Association.

We had also received letters from large ingredient suppliers with a list of items they were concerned about – one of which was humane treatment of dairy cattle, Laffranchi said.

"We felt it was best to get a certification in order to set a standard," he said. "Otherwise, we would have everybody sending us lists of things they would like to see done."

Because we're a smaller company making about 2.2 million pounds of cheese per year, we can generally accommodate our customers, Laffranchi said.

When choosing a certifying agency, Laffranchi said he looked out for anything that went against good, sound practices for dairy cattle husbandry. It's also a matter of training your staff to do it right. Some people may get certification and say "forget about it," but we actually talk about those policies and principles we've agreed to follow, Laffranchi continued.

Marketing Humane Certification On Websites, Cheese Labels & Catalogs

Haystack Mountain has put the Certified Humane logo on its website, and added the logo to its Red Cloud, Queso de Mano and Sunlight cheese labels.

Shelburne Farms' includes its HFAC certification in its marketing and branding collateral and promo-

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Humane Labeling

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tional initiatives, but at this point, its Farmhouse Cheddar doesn't include the HFAC certification logo – in large part due to space constraints on fairly small labels, Buckingham added.

Redwood Hill Farm of Sebastopol, CA, is the first goat dairy to achieve HFAC certification. The farm hopes to display the HFAC logo on its new cheese labels, said manager Scott Bice.

Hope Acres, LLC of Brogue, PA, will begin marketing its line of Brown Cow ice cream, milk, yogurt and other specialty dairy products under the Certified Humane label early next summer when the company completes its new Grade A processing facility, outfitted with European robotic technologies.

Hope Acres president Aaron Heindel said the reason for going humane was to set Hope Acres apart from other local dairies.

"We are not organic, but knew we would qualify for being humane fairly easily since we have always treated our animals with the best of care," Heindel said.

The biggest obstacle in obtaining certification was not being able to have animals tied up for any amount of time, Heindel said.

"We always had our cows that just calved tied up for the first week so we could attend to them easier; now, we have separate pens for each new mother," he said.

Cedar Grove is primarily marketing its Food Alliance Certified products through foodservice channels. As animal welfare issues get more media attention, marketing challenges will be easier to overcome, Wills said.

"The need to inform individual consumers about the procedure for certification and the practices cov-

ered makes direct marketing more challenging than sales to wholesale and foodservice buyers," he said.

Are Customers Willing To Pay For A 'Higher Standard' Of Cheesemaking?

Overall, it's pretty clear that a "higher standard" food – organic, all-natural, locally-produced, certified humane – is commanding more and more consumer attention and dollars these days, said Shelburne Farms' Scott Buckingham.

"We believe these issues and trends will only become more pronounced and meaningful to the populace and – by extension – more available in the marketplace," he continued.

"It's a limp marketing push, just like any other 'certification'. It hasn't helped us or hurt us. We are who we are, and this didn't change that."

—Trent Hendricks,
Hendricks Farms & Dairy,
LLC

Being certified is a great benefit for our company and customers, but it wouldn't justify us raising our prices, said Haystack Mountain's Maureen Reagan.

Customers who are educated and concerned about humane practices probably would spend more on these products, she continued.

Because the cost of independent certification is significant, Wills said Cedar Grove needed to increase the price of its cheese products to compensate for added expense. Additionally, farmers expect some compensation for going through the process – even if their practices remain the same, Wills continued.

However, the Food Alliance com-

panies animal welfare requirements with other practices including labor standards and environmental practices, Wills said. The combined package has greater appeal to buyers and therefore, attracts a broader spectrum of customers.

The price of the end product will definitely be greater because of added costs, along with a fee to use the Certified Humane logo, Hope Acres' Aaron Heindel said.

"I do believe people will be willing to pay the higher price simply because it gives people the satisfaction that they are supporting a farm that is taking care of its animals and not being abusive or inhumane," Heindel said.

As far as who will buy humane-raised milk products, Heindel said if the issue is important enough to someone, they will be willing to pay the price, regardless of economic status. Heindel projects a 10 to 20 percent increase on Hope Acres specialty milk products after final certification.

"The cost of the product will not be anything like organic products, which I believe is primarily for the upper class who have discretionary funds," Heindel said.

While Rumiano Cheese Company did not increase the price of its organic cheese to compensate for new standards, all current and future Rumiano organic dairy producers must achieve American Humane Certified assessments prior to shipping.

Humanely-produced cheese sells best in the western US – particularly California – with the majority being sold to foodservice for filling ingredients, Joby Rumiano said.

While he predicts the market to eventually reach middle America, it's doubtful the typical low- to middle-income buyer will go out of

• See Humane Labeling, p. 23

Chr. Hansen Introduces Four New Cultures For Soft Cheese Varieties

Chr. Hansen is introducing four new soft cheese cultures intended to meet cheese maker needs and consumer preferences.

Two thermophilic cultures, F-DVS GK-01 and F-DVS CZ-03, were developed for helping soft cheese producers reach the acidification and texture needs of Gorgonzola and Crescenza; and two mesophilic cultures, F-DVS TRADI-01 and F-DVS FRESH-01, contributing to obtain the unique acidification and flavor of cheese based on mesophilic production, such as Camembert and different Blue cheeses.

Mesophilic cultures thrive in temperatures between 15 and 35 degrees C (59-95 degrees F), while thermophilic cultures require between 35 and 45 degrees C (95-113 degrees F).

The new cheese cultures come in the easy-to-use DVS (Direct Vat Set) packaging form invented by Chr. Hansen.

DVS is a highly concentrated and standardized frozen or freeze-dried dairy culture used for the direct inoculation of milk.

Direct Vat Set (DVS) cultures need no activation or other treatment prior to use and offer a number of advantages in terms of flexibility of use, consistent performance, no investment in bulk starter equipment and the possibility of using customized culture blends, Chr. Hansen noted.

Soft cheese is the fourth largest cheese segment in the world, accounting for 12 percent of global cheese production.

For more information, visit www.chr-hansen.com. •

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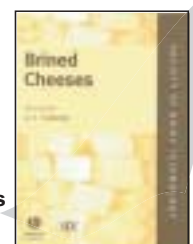
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To Order

Adulterated Butter Case Nets Two Convictions In French Court

Creteil, France—The Magistrates Court in Creteil, France, has imposed suspended prison sentences on the managers of a dairy company found guilty of selling products manufactured using adulterated butter.

Defendants will also have to pay back over 23 million euros.

The judgment is the result of an international investigation in which the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) played an active part, providing back-up for investigations in France, Italy, Belgium and Germany.

The aim of the investigations was to uncover and prosecute offenses involving the production and distribution of adulterated butter on the European market, which therefore have implications for the European Union's (EU) budget.

Last November, the Creteil Magistrates Court sentenced the defendants to eight months' and five months' imprisonment, respectively, for selling goods under false pretenses. Both sentences were suspended.

The defendants must also pay back over 23 million euros in unlawfully obtained European subsidies to the French Office for Livestock, which is the agency responsible for paying out EU subsidies in France. As a civil party, the Office for Livestock applied for repayment of the subsidies received by the dairy company between 1997 and 2000 for products which should not have been designated as butter.

However, the court acquitted the defendants of the charge of conspiracy to defraud in this case of European subsidy fraud.

The Creteil Court judgment is still subject to appeal.

Criminal proceedings are currently pending in Italy (Naples) and Belgium (Verviers and Veurne). The Germany authorities have not opened criminal cases but have recovered EU subsidies totaling 150,000 euros.

According to a December 2000 OLAF press release, the fraud operated in the following way: for several years a number of Italian-based companies manufactured industrial butter using substances such as animal fat and synthetic materials and thereafter sold on this "butter" to clients based in other EU countries, more particularly France and Belgium.

Following inquiries conducted in these countries, it was discovered that a number of possibly adulterated shipments were also made to Germany prior to April 1999.

The clients of the Italian-based companies, normally reputable butter traders and producers, were attracted by the cheaper price of this product and the possibilities of obtaining further gains through the EU disposal measures and export refunds in respect of butterfat. •

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their way to purchase humanely-made cheese, Rumiano said.

The market is definitely geared toward the high-income, health-conscious customers who already buy organic and are looking for value-added products, he said.

Right now, I don't think customers are willing to pay more for certified humane products because they aren't aware of the difference from other cheese products, Rumiano said. But with more advertising and press, they'll eventually become aware and willing to pay a premium.

When a consumer is looking through a cheese case with a plethora of choices, they will choose a cheese that is humane certified over one that is not, even if it means paying a bit more, said Redwood Hills' Scott Bice.

"I know I would," he said. "There is a growing trend for the public to know where their food came from and how it's made, as well as how the animals are treated in the process."

Other cheese manufacturers doubt the label will help boost profits.

By earning a certified humane label, it may help a cheese stand out but won't necessarily increase sales, Hendricks said.

Label Will Hit Mainstream; Rural

Shoppers More Sympathetic?

Some cheese manufacturers argue humane certified cheese will sell better in urban, coastal areas; others say rural residents will be more sympathetic to animal treatment. Both agree it's only a matter of time before the humane certified label is prominent in the everyday market.

Mainstream America is the most likely market for certified humane cheese products in the long run, according to Wills.

"People with access to the countryside are more aware of the changes in farming practices and their impact on the environment and rural communities," he said. "Main Street USA is more committed to buying from local producers and people who share their values."

"Most urban, upscale consumers are probably too far removed from their food to have a realistic or sustained interest in the farming practices involved," he continued.

I would like to believe that Certified Humane would sell better anywhere in the country, added Redwood Hills' Scott Bice, because I think most of us have a strong compassion for animals.

"If there is a big difference in price with Certified Humane compared to non-certified cheeses, I think the Certified Humane cheeses will sell better in more progressive areas," he continued.

The trend is definitely going to continue to grow, with more certifying agencies popping up everywhere, Rumiano said.

"I began looking into humane certification two years ago and at that time, there were only two agencies I could find doing what I wanted as far as humane animal certification," Rumiano said.

"Now when I travel to trade shows, I see 'Humane Certification' booths all over offering certifications to just about anyone who wants to pay for it," he continued.

"If there is a big difference in price with Certified Humane compared to non-certified cheeses, I think the Certified Humane cheeses will sell better in more progressive areas."

Scott Bice, Redwood Hills

The probability of Certified Humane reaching mainstream America only increases with programs like HFAC raising national awareness and producers signing on to the criterion and presenting their philosophies and practices to the marketplace, added Shelburne Farms' Scott Buckingham.

Mainstream America is already buying these products, HFAC's Adele Douglass said. Echo Farm Puddings, for example, are sold in large supermarkets throughout New England.

"Every day, we receive calls and

emails from consumers who are looking for products with the Certified Humane label and want to know where in their neighborhoods they can find them," Douglass continued.

Market Saturation May Cause Label To Lose Potency, 'Like Organics'

As more humanely-certified cheese labels pop up in grocery stores across the US, some manufacturers fear the message will eventually become diluted.

"It's a limp marketing push, just like any other 'certification,'" Hendricks said. "It hasn't helped us or hurt us. We are who we are, and this didn't change that."

Soon mainstream America will be inundated with the humane manufacturing label, Hendricks said.

"Yeah - just about the time it becomes completely impotent - just like organics," Hendricks continued.

Apparently, 64 other producers would disagree with this assessment, Douglass said. The Certified Humane program has received accolades from *Good Housekeeping*, *Vanity Fair*, *USA Today*, and *Self Magazine*, among others, precisely because our label is highly meaningful.

I think that's a true statement - like developing a callous to an advertising, Loleta's Bob Laffranchi said. However, when you walk up to a buyer and you don't have it, that may be a problem.

Certification may not sell more on the outside, Laffranchi said. The question is - does it fit the philosophy of the person deciding whether or not to buy your cheese? •

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