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202/225-2610

May 29, 2002

The Honorable Philip Crane, Chairman
Subcommittee on Trade
Committee on Ways and Means
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Crane:

Thank you for the invitation to submit written comments on technical corrections to U.S. trade laws and miscellaneous duty suspension bills being considered by the subcommittee on trade.

We are writing specifically in opposition to H.R. 1786, a bill to impose tariff-rate quotas on casein, caseinates and milk protein concentrates.

Dean Foods Company is the leading processor and distributor of milk and dairy products in the United States. We are also a major manufacturer of flavored and non-flavored nondairy coffee creamers and whiteners, whipped and aerosol nondairy toppings, pastry toppings and cultured dressings and sauces. Milk derived proteins and specifically, casein and sodium caseinates, are highly functional and desirable ingredients used in the manufacture of these specialty products.

Unfortunately, casein and caseinates are not produced in the United States due in part to the high federal support price for nonfat dry milk. We must import these essential ingredients to make our products. Extensive research over many years has not identified any acceptable domestically produced alternatives. Nonfat dry milk is not a suitable substitute since it contains lactose and lacks many essential functional and flavor characteristics we need to make our specialty products. We are therefore strongly opposed to any action that would limit the availability or artificially increase the cost of these imported ingredients.

We ask you to reject H.R. 1786 or any other bill to restrict the availability of these ingredients. Should you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

William C. Tinklepaugh,
Senior Vice President, Government & Industry Relations
Dean Foods Company