

100 Years of Milk and Dairy Safety



This year, we mark a momentous milestone – the 100th anniversary of the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO). Finding its roots in the inception of the Standard Milk Ordinance (SMO) of 1924 by the United States Public Health Service (USPHS), the PMO was first adopted by the state of Alabama¹. The National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS) was first convened in 1950 to strengthen U.S. milk safety programs. The NCIMS began annual gatherings of all states and, by 1977, had formed a formal partnership with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to enhance federal and state collaboration with the dairy industry in monitoring and improving the safety of the nation's milk supply¹. The SMO transitioned into what we know today as the Grade "A" Pasteurized Milk Ordinance in 1965². This significant regulation was established with the primary aim of securing the safety and integrity of milk and dairy products. In the era preceding the PMO, one (1) out of every four (4) food-borne illnesses were directly related to dairy consumption³. In striking contrast, present-day statistics show milk as one of the most reliably safe foods, boasting fewer than one (1) illness per 2 billion servings of milk products⁴.

The PMO's reputation as the premier standard for milk processing directives is well-earned. It underpins the strong safety record of U.S. Grade "A" milk and dairy products⁵. The PMO's effectiveness lies in its uniformity, being collaboratively sculpted by the USPHS/FDA with contributions from multiple stakeholders, including federal, state, and local milk regulatory and rating agencies, health and agriculture departments, various segments of the dairy industry (producers, operators, manufacturers), associations (like the International Association for Food Protection; IAFP), educational and research institutions, as well as individual sanitarians and the public.

Mirroring the mission of the PMO, the IAFP Dairy Quality and Safety Professional Development Group (PDG) is equally dedicated to fostering the production and processing of dairy that meets exceptional standards of quality and safety. Reflecting on the storied past of IAFP, we gain an appreciation for our substantial yet instrumental inception as milk sanitarians⁶. In 1911, the International Association of Dairy and Milk Inspectors was founded and the organization underwent an evolution over 88 years, encompassing three distinct name changes before arriving at what is known today as IAFP.

As we recall the trailblazers who first championed food quality and safety through milk sanitation efforts, we simultaneously acknowledge the PMO's enduring legacy. In this landmark year, let us unite in cherishing and applauding our dairy heritage!

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