

June 7, 2002

Chairman Phil Crane
House Ways and Means Committee
Subcommittee on Trade
1104 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Oppose Legislation to Raise Import Tariffs on Casein/Caseinates and Milk Protein Conc.

Dear Mr. Coleman,

I am writing to express my opposition to legislation, HR 1786, that would substantially increase the cost of imported casein, caseinates, and milk protein concentrates (MPC) by mandating new tariff-rate quotas and higher tariffs on these products. This action would force higher costs on U.S. industries, companies and consumers and restrict available sources of supply, yet there is no domestic industry supplying these products.

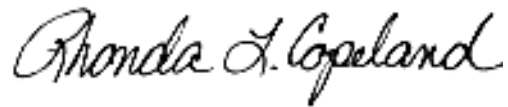
Ross Products Division Abbott Laboratories uses casein and caseinates in a wide variety of medical nutritional products such as Ensure® which provide nutrition support hospital, nursing home, and home care patients, many of whom are elderly. There are no substitute milk protein products readily available as a replacement for casein and caseinates. Restricting the availability of casein and caseinates and increasing the cost through tariffs could adversely impact Ross Products' ability to produce these products and lead to higher manufacturing and ultimately consumer and healthcare costs.

Ross Products uses casein and caseinates because of their functionally and superior attributes over nonfat dry milk. Casein and caseinates have higher levels of protein, a greater consistency of protein content levels, and have had other milk components removed (such as lactose and minerals) that may not be desired in our manufactured products. Increased availability of casein and caseinates from foreign suppliers in recent years is a direct result of their use of more modern filtration technologies. Similar capabilities have not been developed to the same degree in the U.S., largely because the U.S. dairy price support program has established an economic disincentive for domestic production of these functionally enhanced ingredients.

Instead of erecting trade barriers to imports, we should be operating U.S. dairy policy so as to provide production of these value-added milk ingredients.

Ross Products Division opposes the Congressman Obey's HR 1786 and its proposal to raise import tariffs on casein, caseinates and milk protein concentrates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rhonda L. Copeland". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Rhonda L. Copeland
Director Purchasing
Abbott Laboratories
Ross Products Division
625 Cleveland Avenue
Columbus, OH 43215