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## **IATP Congratulates Yoplait on Eliminating rBGH New Smart Guide for Minnesotans Lists Other Companies That Have Banned rBGH**

Minneapolis – General Mills' Yoplait brand announced today that by August 2009 it would stop using milk from cows injected with the synthetic hormone, recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH). The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) congratulates Yoplait on its decision.

"Yoplait joins a growing number of companies that have listened to consumers and rejected dairy from cows injected with rBGH," said David Wallinga, M.D., Director of IATP's Food and Health Program. "The marketplace is following the public health community, which has long been cautioning about the unnecessary use of routine hormones and antibiotics in animals used for food."

Fortunately for Minnesotans, Yoplait is just the latest addition to a long list of companies offering milk, cheese and other products from cows not injected with rBGH. To help consumers find such producers, IATP has published the new consumer Smart Guide to Minnesota Dairy Without rBGH, available at: [www.iatp.org](http://www.iatp.org).

When rBGH arrived on the market as Posilac in 1994, it was one of the first genetically engineered agriculture products. Posilac was marketed as a way for dairy farmers to improve income by slightly increasing milk production. But 15 years later, dairy farmers are experiencing the largest price drop in 50 years. And a side effect of rBGH (listed on the label) is the propensity for the hormone to make cows sick with udder infections, leading to suffering and forcing farmers to increase their antibiotic use.

"Avoiding antibiotic use wherever possible is an important public health goal, because there is now a consensus among scientists that antibiotic use in farm animals increases antibiotic resistance, often transmitted back to humans," said Dr. Wallinga.

Use of rBGH also raises levels of Insulin-like Growth Factor-1 (IGF-1) in cows and cow's milk. Higher IGF-1 levels in human blood are associated with higher rates of colon, breast and prostate cancer. What scientists still lack are sufficient data to assure that drinking milk with higher IGF-1 levels, from rBGH-treated cows, won't translate into higher IGF-1 levels in the blood of the consumer.

Consumers have become increasingly concerned about these rBGH risks. Almost 60 percent of U.S. consumers state that they would pay a premium for dairy products coming from cows not treated with the hormone. And because of various rBGH risks, the hormone has not been approved in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, or the 27 countries of the European Union.

*IATP works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems.*