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MEIJER OFFERS MILK PRODUCED WITHOUT ARTIFICIAL GROWTH HORMONE

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – Supercenter retailer Meijer has begun offering its own-brand milk from cows that have not been treated with the synthetic growth hormone rBST, an artificial growth hormone. The transition was announced today by Ralph Fischer, Group Vice President of Grocery for Meijer.

“Our customers have asked for a different choice in their milk, as many prefer it from cows that have not been treated with artificial growth hormones,” said Fischer. “We’ve researched the topic and have listened to our customers. If it’s important to them, it’s important to us.”

The Michigan-based supercenter chain is one of the first major grocers in the region to offer its shoppers a branded line of milk produced without the use of the artificial growth hormone. The decision will affect all Whole, 2% Reduced Fat, 1% Lowfat, ½% Lowfat and Fat Free Meijer brand milk in gallon and half-gallon sizes. Meijer brand chocolate milk and all quart- and pint-size containers will follow suit later this year.

This move has no affect on Meijer’s line of Meijer Organics Milk, since these products are guaranteed organic, and would not contain milk from any cow injected with a growth hormone. USDA Organic standards require that cows not be injected with antibiotics or artificial growth hormones.

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The protein rBST (recombinant bovine somatotropin) is a synthetically developed growth hormone that is used by some dairy farmers to increase a cow's milk production. This supplements the cow's naturally occurring growth hormone, a protein hormone that stimulates milk production. This move by Meijer will not affect the taste, or nutritional value of its popular brand of milk. It should also have little if any effect on the price to consumers.

The Food & Drug Administration made initial rulings on the safety of rBST in 1985. Prior to, and since the commercial approval of rBST in 1993, numerous health organizations (WHO, AMA, NIH, et al.) have concluded that milk produced from rBST-supplemented cows is safe. Despite posing no risk to human health, many consumers prefer milk produced without the use of rBST.

“Consumers want the same wholesome and delicious taste of our Meijer brand milk without the concerns of cows being treated with this artificial growth hormone. This move is not a reaction to any health concerns – it's a decision to give our customers what they want,” Fischer said.

Meijer customers will notice all new packaging for the Meijer brand of milk, along with a written pledge that no artificial growth hormones were administered to cows supplying the milk. Dairy processing plants that supply Meijer milk will have signed affidavits from dairy farmers stating that they do not use rBST in their herds.

About Meijer

Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Michigan-based retailer that operates 181 supercenters throughout Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Kentucky. As the inventor of the “one-stop shopping” concept, Meijer stores have evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive electronics departments, garden centers and apparel offerings. Additional information on Meijer can be found at www.meijer.com.

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