

RHODE ISLAND'S POSITION ON THE NORTHEAST DAIRY COMPACT
Commissioner Jametta Alston, RI Attorney General's office, May 11, 2001

Each delegation of the Northeast Dairy Compact has its own unique characteristics. Rhode Island's delegation is especially unique with its strong representation from the consumer perspective.

Rhode Islanders are unique that they are willing to pay more to satisfy their preference for native agricultural products. With the assistance of the Compact this preference can be satisfied and prices are relatively stable.

Our delegation serves as a watchdog or better, a canary for the Compact. Miners used canaries to detect when the air was not good. In the same vein, Rhode Island serves to tell the Compact whether its policies are assisting the consumer in the marketplace or overburdening the consumer with the increase of milk prices. As of this date, the Compact has been successful in creating a market place where milk can be purchased at competitive prices.

The Department of the Attorney General has been monitoring the events in the dairy marketplace. We have followed the activities of the large milk processors and the announced merger in Texas of Suiza and Dean Foods. We are interested in the investigations of our sister states and stand ready to assist if requested.

To conclude, Rhode Island is pleased to be a member of the Northeast Dairy Compact and we support the re-certification of the Compact.