



Congressional Plant Tour Guide



IDFA

**International
Dairy Foods
Association**



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INTRODUCTION

Dear IDFA Member,

Thank for your interest in hosting a legislator at one of your facilities. This guide will help you plan, prepare and execute a successful tour and ensure that your experience is as effective as possible.

Conducting a site visit for legislators and their staff is an excellent way to build relationships for your company and increase support for important legislative priorities for the dairy industry.

These facility tours also provide valuable opportunities for lawmakers to meet with their constituents (your employees), hear the success stories and challenges of dairy food manufacturers and see firsthand how policies crafted in Washington impact businesses in their state or district.

Another benefit these visits offer is positive press opportunities for your company, as well as for the legislator. Moreover, the legislator will see firsthand the important role that you play in your community, which will positively affect future policy developments that will be important to you and our industry.

Thanks again for your interest in hosting a tour. Please reach out if you have questions. The IDFA Team is ready to help.

Sincerely,
Colin Newman

For more information, contact:

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CHECKLIST FOR PLANT TOURS

SCHEDULE THE TOUR

- ✓ Reach out to IDFA staff
- ✓ Determine desired time-frame. It's best to be as flexible as possible.

ORGANIZE THE TOUR

- ✓ Put together an internal planning group, if necessary;
- ✓ Decide who will meet with the legislator; (IDFA can send a team member to help)
- ✓ Identify your tour guide and ensure that he or she is well-informed;
- ✓ Designate a note taker;
- ✓ Designate a photographer;
- ✓ Reserve or identify a room for the lawmaker to address your staff;
- ✓ Research background information on the visiting Member of Congress and craft introductory remarks; (IDFA's Legislative Affairs team can provide a detailed background and talking points)
- ✓ Determine product display, if desired;
- ✓ Gather company literature and any background materials; and
- ✓ Determine if media representatives should be invited. If yes, clear the invitations with the congressional office.

CONDUCT THE TOUR

- ✓ Welcome your guest(s);
- ✓ Provide safety equipment, if applicable;
- ✓ Show the lawmaker how your production line works;
- ✓ Work any prepared talking points into the conversation during the tour; and
- ✓ Allow the lawmaker to sample product off the line, if possible.

FOLLOW-UP AFTER THE TOUR

- ✓ Send thank-you notes or emails to all guests;
- ✓ Send photos to Member of Congress and IDFA;
- ✓ Share the photos on social media; and
- ✓ Continue the dialogue with the lawmaker by corresponding on a periodic basis.

SCHEDULE THE TOUR

Contact Colin Newman, Director, Industry Relations & Political Affairs, at cnewman@idfa.org or (202) 220-3518. He will discuss with you the potential Members of Congress to invite (based on your company's locations), your desired timeframe and other pertinent details before reaching out to the invited office(s) to schedule the tour.

If you can be flexible on the date and time of tour, your Member of Congress will appreciate it. Once the tour is scheduled, be prepared for last-minute schedule changes. The ideal time to schedule a tour is during a congressional recess period when Members of Congress are typically back in their states or districts rather than in Washington, D.C. In the current election year, some of the longest recesses are:

- Presidents' Day (mid-February)
- Easter/Passover (March or April)
- Independence Day (late June-early July)
- Summer (mid-July through Labor Day)*
- October
- Veterans Day (early November)
- Thanksgiving
- Late December through early January

***August is Take Your Legislator to Work Month**, a particularly good time to conduct a tour. Members are in their districts for a long, extended break and have more flexibility for site visits. In addition to formal recesses, Members are most likely to be in their home districts on Mondays and Fridays.

ORGANIZE THE TOUR

There are several staffing considerations when conducting a plant tour. You may decide it's a good idea to put together an internal planning group to discuss the logistics of the tour, but if you have hosted officials for tours previously, this may not be necessary. You will need to determine who will meet with the lawmaker and who will do the introduction. Also, identify a tour "guide," if not yourself, and ensure they are fully informed on what you wish to be included on the tour. Designate someone to take notes and snap photos.

When possible, identify a room where the lawmaker can talk with your staff and enjoy refreshments. Prepare an information packet for your visitors, which can include information on your company history and contributions to the local and

state economy, as well as your positions on any legislative issues that are important to you, your company and the dairy industry. IDFA can supply appropriate “talking points” for the visit. For example, you might want to thank your Member for co-sponsoring legislation that is important to our industry, or to urge your Member to vote for or against a particular bill that is pending in Congress.

Be sure to do some research on the visiting lawmaker in advance of the tour to identify areas of common interest. Visit the lawmaker’s website to review his or her biography and committee assignments.

Plant tours can be excellent opportunities for positive press for both your business and the Member of Congress, but you should always clear any media participation with the congressional office before issuing any invitations to the media. If you receive approval for media attendance, draft a media advisory containing the date, time, specific location, parking accommodations and lighting requirements. IDFA can provide a sample media advisory on request and can reach out to media on your behalf.

CONDUCT THE TOUR

Welcome your guest(s) warmly, including any staff members in attendance. Your enthusiasm will likely be infectious. You may choose to conduct your meeting first, and follow with the tour, or begin with the tour and end with a discussion. It is totally up to you.

Don’t be shy; this is your chance to brag. Show your legislator how your machinery works, what technology is being used, what makes your product(s) different or unique. Be sure to let him or her know if you have made a new investment in the facility, added jobs or otherwise increased your footprint in the district or state. Here are some key items to mention:

- Products being manufactured and where they are sold;
- Number of people employed in your plant and others around the state or country;
- Worker health, safety and training programs;
- Payroll and benefits, reminding your visitor that each wage dollar multiplies in the wage earner’s community;
- Your export status, especially if any pending free trade agreements would affect your business;

- Community impact, including any charitable endeavors or other positive roles your company plays in your community; and
- The impact, positive or negative, that any pending legislation could have on your company.

Let your visitor be an active participant. If feasible, offer your visitor the chance to address your employees. Allow him or her to shake hands, run a machine, participate in a “ribbon-cutting” and definitely taste product fresh off the line, if possible. These are memorable experiences and great photo opportunities!

FOLLOW-UP AFTER THE TOUR

A plant tour enhances the mutual understanding between you and your elected official. To make certain he or she remembers your company, follow-up efforts are important.

Be sure to send a thank-you note, reiterating any key issues discussed during the tour. Invite the legislator to return at any time or to another appropriate company event, such as a company picnic.

Send photos taken to Members of Congress and IDFA. Photos from these tours frequently will appear in a constituent newsletter or on the legislator’s office wall or website. IDFA will always feature photos in our social media efforts and will include a story about your plant tour in IDFA’s News Update. Be sure to use your own social media platforms to recap the tour and publish photos.

Continue your communications with the lawmaker after the visit. Reach out periodically to the member of Congress and the staff that participated in the tour to stay in touch and offer substantive policy advice. Track how your legislator votes on legislation and express your thanks when he or she votes in favor of your positions.

REMEMBER: Members of Congress want to hear directly from employers and employees in their states and districts. There is no more effective proponent for your business than you.

If you have any questions or need additional assistance, contact Colin Newman, Director, Industry Relations & Political Affairs, at cnewman@idfa.org or (202) 220-3518.



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