



Statement of the Beer Institute, the Brewers Association and the National Beer Wholesalers Association on USDA Dietary Guidelines

WASHINGTON (February 22, 2011) – Today, the Beer Institute, the Brewers Association and the National Beer Wholesalers Association released the following joint statement on the USDA Dietary Guidelines:

“The U.S. government's recently issued Dietary Guidelines have once again refused to perpetuate the myth of the so-called ‘standard drink.’ The Guidelines discuss levels of alcohol content for the purpose of describing consumption patterns, yet the distilled spirits companies have for decades continued to try to convince the public that this information equates to a ‘standard drink’ among different alcohol beverages.

“The idea of a ‘standard drink’ is misleading to consumers since it does not reflect how liquor is served or consumed. Not all alcohol is equal, meaning one alcohol beverage can have significantly more or less alcohol content than another. For example, depending on the proof of alcohol used, the mixer, and the bartender's pouring habits, a so-called ‘standard’ mixed drink may contain 2, 3 or even 4 times more pure alcohol content and calories than the average light beer. It is common knowledge that two martinis consumed over the course of two hours could certainly produce a different effect than two light beers consumed over the same period. Furthermore, the false premise of a ‘standard drink’ is even more confusing considering that significant variations in alcohol concentration exist among the three product categories and even within each category. Beer remains the beverage of moderation with an average ABV of under 5%, compared to distilled spirits, which average between 35 - 40% ABV.

“Brewers, importers and distributors want consumers to have beverage information that is accurate and helpful, especially as the Dietary Guidelines stress the importance of controlling calorie intake in regards to all food and beverages. The notion of a ‘standard drink’ does not meet those requirements.

“The Guidelines state that adults who consume alcohol should do so ‘in moderation’ and that some individuals may experience beneficial effects from the responsible consumption of alcohol. In fact, the beer industry has long supported programs and messages that encourage responsible consumption of our products.”

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