



**CHEESE IMPORTERS**  
**ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

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## **Board Appoints Executive Director and Legal Counsel**

As most of you know, in the late fall, the CIAA chose to seek change in our affiliation with our legal counsel and to review the management set-up for the association. During the past several months, we have spent considerable time interviewing potential firms and deciding on what we believe to be the best structure for our association and its members.

Due to the importance we put on managing both the association's legal and government agenda, the committee went to great lengths to interview and vet multiple law firms and lobbyists to ensure we not only replaced our legal counsel, but also used this opportunity to increase our ability to affectively represent the association's legislative affairs.

We are pleased to announce that we have appointed ***Brandon Partridge of the Tipton Group to serve as CIAA's Executive Director.*** Through our contract with The Tipton Group, Brandon will serve as our primary contact to Capitol Hill, spearheading all Government Relations activities as well as taking a lead role in member relations. Many of you may recognize Brandon from some of our membership meetings since he has been a keynote speaker on issues such as 6.25B and the Dairy Import Assessment. Brandon's ability to understand our needs from both the government relations side and from the food industry side makes him a true asset to our association.

In addition to the Tipton Group we will also retain as general counsel, the Washington law firm of ***Olsson, Frank, Weeda, Terman, Bode, Matz PC.*** Our legal counsel and primary contact will be ***John Bode Esq.*** John's firm specializes in the food industry with an expertise in food safety, FDA and USDA regulations and relations. John will monitor legislative affairs pertinent to the CIAA as well as manage legal issues for our association.

***Annette Summers*** and her team at ***Giuffrida Associates*** will continue to manage our Headquarters Office as they've always done. Annette will serve as our Chief of Staff, overseeing all administrative and event functions of our association. As needed, you should feel free to call our Headquarters Office as always.

The process involved in securing our additional management and legal team was extensive. We appreciate the time that many of our members took to provide us with feedback and recommendations. In addition, we'd like to express our appreciation to the CIAA Board of Directors and to the Search Committee, chaired by Tom Gellert, that dedicated significant time in the last 4 months to this process. We feel strongly that our current management

team along with Brandon and John will provide us a unified level of expertise that will actively support and manage our Association.

We hope you will join us in welcoming our new members to the CIAA Management Team. We look forward to seeing you at our April 16<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting where Brandon and John will introduce their organizations and make presentations pertinent to the Association's Washington agenda. Please do not miss this important meeting.

Best regards,

*Chris Franco*

President

*Ken Meyers*

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

*Tom Gellert*

Search Committee Chair