International Consensus Statement on the Terminology, Coding and Labeling of Human Milk Donations

The Boards of the European Milk Bank Association, Human Milk Banking Association of North America and ICCBBA, recognizing:

- the rapidly increasing demand for donated human milk as the nutrition of choice where mother's milk is not available;

- the global growth in the numbers of milk banks and the need for common standards of practice;

- the need for globally unique identification of milk donations to support international traceability and biovigilance;

- the benefit of international standardization of terminology, coding and labeling in clinical practice;

- the benefit of bar coding and other electronic messaging systems to ensure accurate and rapid transfer of critical information and to help eliminate manual transcription errors;

- the existing widespread use of the international information standard ISBT 128 in the fields of transfusion and transplantation;

- the successful implementation of an ISBT 128 bar coding and labeling system for human milk by the 'the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (GGC) Milk Bank, Glasgow, UK;

- the need for international management and technical co-operation for the successful maintenance and development of such standards;

support the use of the ISBT 128 international coding standard for the bar coding and labeling of human milk donations.

To achieve this objective the above associations will form an international advisory group to:

a) develop a standard terminology to describe milk donations;
b) provide guidance on standard labeling of milk donations;
c) provide advice and support to milk banks introducing the standard;
d) advise on the ongoing development of the ISBT 128 standard to support new developments in milk banking.

Milk banks should take note of this initiative and plan for adoption of ISBT 128 coding and labeling of their products once the standard has been published.

For further information on this initiative see http://www.iccbba.org/subject-area/milk-bank