

Support for the *DAIRY PRIDE Act*

Dairy organizations support the legislation

“For too long, the FDA has turned a blind eye to the misbranding of imitation dairy products, despite the decades-old federal law that milk comes from animals, not vegetables or nuts. None of these imitators provides the same high quality and quantity of nutrition offered by real milk. Senator Baldwin’s bipartisan *DAIRY PRIDE Act*, coauthored by Senator Risch, will simply ensure that FDA enforces current law by requiring marketers of these imitation products to call them something other than milk,” **said Jim Mulhern, President and CEO of the National Milk Producers Federation.**

“Dairy farmers invest a great deal of time and money to produce a wholesome, nutritious product for consumers, and take pride in the milk they produce. The federal government has promised to ensure that the term “milk” on store shelves can only be used on dairy products. But they have fallen short on that promise. The bill introduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin will help ensure that products labeled as milk are indeed dairy products. Consumers and dairy farmers alike will be the beneficiaries of this effort,” **said Steve Etko, Midwest Dairy Coalition.**

“Wisconsin’s dairy industry is the backbone of our state’s agricultural economy. We receive world-wide recognition because our farmers take pride in providing healthy and safe dairy products to their customers. The labeling and marketing of all dairy milk products should be accurate and enforced by the Food and Drug Administration,” **said Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation President Jim Holte.**

“Wisconsin Farmers Union fully supports the introduction and swift passage of the *DAIRY PRIDE Act*. Our grassroots, member-driven policy opposes any changes in the FDA definition of milk, cheese or other products made with milk and opposes the use of the word “milk” to designate any product not derived from mammals,” **said Darin Von Ruden, President of the Wisconsin Farmers Union.**

What are cheese makers and dairy processors saying?

“Research shows that when someone buys cheese, they’re expecting that product to have been made with real milk, not a nut or a bean,” **said John Umhoefer, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association Executive Director.** “WCMA members support Senator Baldwin’s work to enforce labeling standards and help consumers make well-informed choices at the grocery store.”

“American consumers are best served by clear labeling of their food. When they buy cheese, yogurt, and ice cream at the grocery store, they expect those products are made with real milk – not a plant-based imitator,” **said Jeff Schwager, President of Sartori Company in Plymouth, Wisconsin.** “We applaud Senator Baldwin’s work to increase clarity in the marketplace, and encourage lawmakers to join in this important effort.”

“We stand with dairy farmers by saying ‘no’ to the mislabeling of non-dairy products,” **said Marieke Penterman of Marieke Gouda in Thorp, Wisconsin.** “Corporations are taking

advantage of a movement pushing for an ‘ethical’ way to consume products, ironically, by making false and unsubstantiated claims about their products. We thank Senator Baldwin for her work to support transparency in the marketplace, and to support the dairy industry.”

“Nothing compares to the taste or nutritional value of real milk and cheese, so it’s no wonder that the makers of plant-based imitators have labeled their products with dairy terms,” **said Kim Heiman, President of Nasonville Dairy in Marshfield, Wisconsin.** “The truth is, these products are very different, and consumers deserve to know it. We appreciate Senator Baldwin – and the bipartisan coalition of lawmakers supporting the *DAIRY PRIDE Act* – for working to address confusion in the marketplace.”

“When people buy and consume kefir, they expect to get certain benefits and certain nutritional support. Over the years, we have seen a rise in faux kefir products that don’t offer kefir’s health and nutritional benefits. It is our obligation to protect the word and ensure that products labeled as ‘kefir’ are authentic,” **said Julie Smolyansky, CEO of Lifeway Foods.** “We are committed to a marketplace that does not confuse consumers with fake and falsely labeled foods. We look forward to advancing these efforts with Congress and our industry by working for the passage of the *DAIRY PRIDE Act*.”

"We make the world's best Paneer cheese because we use the world's best milk. Real milk. Labels that confuse consumers do not help anyone," **said Paul Scharfman, President of Specialty Cheese Company in Reeseville, Wisconsin.**

What are farmers saying?

“Finally after all these years it is about time someone stands up for the American Dairy farmer. We are held to higher quality and animal care standard every year to keep milk safe. It’s not fair that the name milk should be used by non-dairy drinks to further erode what little profit we have,” **said Jerry Croes from Deer Park, Wisconsin, member of the Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery.**

“While imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, the increasingly common practice of labeling beverages as milk when they quite obviously are not is wrong and misleading. Senator Baldwin’s bill simply asks FDA to enforce current regulations meant to uphold the standards of identity, and integrity, of milk,” **said Brad Nevin, dairy farmer and Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) member-owner in Rice Lake, Wisconsin.**

“As a proud Wisconsin Dairy Farmer, I support Tammy Baldwin’s efforts to introduce the *Dairy Pride Act*. I know the economic struggles we dairy farmers face on a daily basis, as I am also an Ag Lender, helping through the low milk prices. We don’t need competition from plant based drinks being labeled as milk and sending a false message to consumers, and also falsely advertising them as being better than cow’s milk. When compared on nutrients and price, cow’s milk still comes out on top. I am opposed to all false labeling of food products that aren’t true dairy products,” **said Jim Smidel of Smidel Brothers Farms, LLP in Kewaunee, Wisconsin.**

“Jim Smidel, Brothers Smidel Farms, LLP – Kewaunee Wisconsin “Consumers deserve to be treated with respect and that begins with proper and accurate food labels. Milk is clearly defined by the FDA, and this definition should also be enforced,” **said John Rettler of Tin Valley Farms in Neosho, Wisconsin.** “It’s about time the FDA upheld its responsibility of enforcing existing labeling requirements, especially when it comes to dairy.”

“Dairy has built a strong reputation as a reliable source of important nutrients we need daily. To use these dairy terms on plant-based products undermines the real value that dairy provides in the form of naturally occurring Calcium, Vitamin D, Vitamin A among others. Consumers associate dairy with the nutrients they need, and those are naturally occurring in milk from cows,” **said Janet Clark of Vision Aire Farms in Eldorado, Wisconsin.**

“National Farmers Union supports policy that encourages the healthy consumption of real dairy products and prevents the mislabeling of imitation and substitute dairy products in the marketplace. We appreciate Senator Baldwin’s leadership on the DAIRY PRIDE Act and her commitment to our nation’s dairy producers,” **said Roger Johnson, President of the National Farmers Union.**

“Cooperative Network strongly supports efforts to protect the integrity of dairy products by requiring national enforcement of the sensible labeling requirements we already have on the books. When misbranded items are corrected, we believe consumers will choose real dairy products over imitations, which will benefit Wisconsin’s vital \$43 billion dollar dairy industry,” **said Dan Smith, President and CEO of the Cooperative Network.**

“The number of plant-based products misusing dairy names on the label has increased dramatically in recent years. The lack of FDA action has led to an anything goes mentality in the marketplace. We thank Senator Baldwin for pushing to increase transparency for customers and fairness for dairy farm families and processors,” **said Brody Stapel, Double Dutch Dairy in Cedar Grove, Wisconsin and President of Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative.**

“Organic Valley applauds Senator Tammy Baldwin for her proposed legislation to ensure food products that use the word “milk” are actually from dairy animals. The nutritional advantages of actual dairy products are superior to plant based juices and products, and we want to be sure that consumers do not get confused into thinking one can substitute for the other. Children especially need the full nutrition – protein, fat, calcium offered by dairy products. While Organic Valley has always supported choice in the marketplace, we support choices that are fully informed and fully transparent. When consumers believe that plant-based products are nutritionally equivalent to milk and other dairy products, this choice is misinformed,” **said Adam Warthesen, Government Relations Manager for CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley.**

Support for the bill

National Milk Producers Federation
Midwest Dairy Coalition
Associated Milk Producers Inc.
Bongards Creameries

Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery
First District Association
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative
Mid-west Dairymen's Company
Rolling Hills Dairy Producers Cooperative
Dairy Business Association
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association
Wisconsin Farm Bureau
Wisconsin Farmers Union
National Farmers Union