

Support for Senator Baldwin's DAIRY PRIDE Act

Dairy farmers and producers from across Wisconsin are strongly supporting Senator Baldwin's reform:

“Finally after all these years, it's 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, member of the Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery in Deer Park, WI.**

“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 of 2015 and 2016. 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 Brothers Smidel Farms, LLP in Kewaunee, WI.**

“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 member-owner of Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) in Rice Lake, WI.**

“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. It's about time the FDA upheld its responsibility of enforcing existing labeling requirements, especially when it comes to dairy,” **said John Rettler of Tin Valley Farms in Neosho, WI.**

“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, WI.**

“Thank you, Senator Baldwin, for taking the initiative to protect the definition of milk, cheese and yogurt. Your advocacy supports the hard and honest work of dairy farmers in Wisconsin and throughout the nation, and more importantly, supports clear and accurate information to be shared on food labels, something consumers deserve,” **said David Cooper, General Manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative in Madison, WI.**

“The FDA has already clearly defined milk, and liquid from a plant does not fit this definition. Existing regulation should be enforced, reserving the use of the term 'milk' exclusively for those products that deliver the nutritional value only found in dairy. We thank Senator Baldwin for her leadership on this matter,” **said Mark Frederixon, Blair Division Manager of Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) in Blair, WI.**

Dairy producer coalitions and groups around the country are also applauding 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 DAIRY PRIDE Act 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 of the Midwest Dairy Coalition.**

"The Wisconsin Dairy Products Association, which represents processors that manufacture a wide range of dairy products, supports Senator Baldwin’s legislation which protects the integrity and image of wholesome and nutritious dairy products," said **Bradley Legreid, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Dairy Products Association.**

"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," **Darin Von Ruden, President of the Wisconsin Farmers Union.**

“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.**

“While imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, dairy imitators do not naturally provide the same level of nutrition as milk does,” said **Michael Dykes, president and CEO of the International Dairy Foods Association.** “We look forward to working with Senator Baldwin on this important legislation.”

“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 **Tom Liebe, President and CEO of the Cooperative Network.**

“We applaud the efforts of Senator Baldwin to ensure that non-dairy foods are not inaccurately labeled as milk, cheese or yogurt. Our dairy farmers and processors work hard to produce incredible food. Milk and other real dairy products offer an almost unbeatable level and variety of nutrition. Mislabeling non-dairy foods confuses people buying these products and misleads them about the nutritional value of the items they purchase. It also hurts dairy farmers and related businesses. This bill is simply asking the FDA to adequately enforce the laws already on the books. It’s a small step that could have a very big positive impact,” said **John Holevoet, Director of Government Affairs, Dairy Business Milk Marketing Cooperative.**