

Assembly approves bill making cheese official state dairy product

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The state Assembly today unanimously approved a bill designating cheese as the official state dairy product.

The proposal, approved 96-0, was the idea of a 4th grade classroom, said Rep. Todd Novak, R-Dodgeville.

Novak authored the bill and ticked off several statistics on the state's cheese production, including that Wisconsin produced more than 3 billion pounds of cheese last year, that the state makes 26 percent of the nation's cheese and that if Wisconsin were a standalone country, it would be the 4th largest cheese producer in the world.

The 4th grade students' testimony at a committee hearing, he said, made it "probably one of the most enjoyable committee hearings I've ever had."

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Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa, D-Milwaukee, also highlighted the state's cheese industry and said she wanted to "shine a light to our dairy workers," many of whom are Hispanic immigrants.

"They are certainly a vitally important part of Wisconsin's dairy industry," she said.