

Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Harsdorf sends letter asking FDA to enforce food labeling

Posted on Tuesday, Jul 17, 2018

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Release Date: July 17, 2018

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MADISON - Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Sheila Harsdorf today sent a letter to Dr. Scott Gottlieb, Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, expressing concern over the agency's policies on food labeling. With an increasing number of plant-based products being marketed as milk, it is critical that FDA enforce labeling that provides clear and transparent information to consumers.

"Given agriculture's many contributions to our state and national economies, upholding standards of identity is critical to the industry as well as beneficial to consumers," said Harsdorf. "Without prompt action and enforcement by the FDA, we will continue to see more and more mislabeling of products, such as milk, that do not meet the FDA's own definitions."

In the letter, Harsdorf noted that regulators in other countries, for example, are enforcing their standards and definitions not allowing plant-based products to be labeled or marketed as milk. She emphasized that it is imperative that the United States do the same in order to not be placed at a competitive disadvantage.

“As a nation, we need honesty and accuracy in the labeling of food products and consistency in enforcement of existing standards,” added Harsdorf. “As food innovations continue to emerge, it is essential that standards of identity and labeling requirements are clear and enforced to maintain the integrity of the agricultural industry and clarity in the marketplace for consumers.”