

Dairy Business Association: Applauds proposals to stop mislabeling of imitation dairy products

Posted on Friday, Sep 13, 2019

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MADISON, Wis. — The state's largest dairy lobbying group today applauded three state lawmakers for a new legislative effort to stop the use of misleading labels on imitation milk and other "dairy" products.

Legislation proposed today by Sen. Howard Marklein, R-Spring Green, and Reps. Travis Tranel, R-Cuba City, and Loren Oldenburg, R-Viroqua, would ban the labeling of products as milk or as a dairy product or ingredient if the food is not made from the milk of a cow, sheep, goat or other mammals.

The following comments are from Tom Crave, president of the Dairy Business Association and a farmer and cheesemaker in south-central Wisconsin.



"The plant-based food industry increasingly masquerades its products as real dairy foods. This mislabeling confuses customers who often make judgments about a food's nutritional value based on its name. Words do matter. Milk is milk, and cheese is cheese. Customers deserve transparency.

"Our dairy farmers across the state applaud the efforts of Senators Marklein and

Representatives Tranel and Oldenburg to create a clear distinction between real dairy foods and plant-based imitations.”

The results of a recent national survey about imitation cheese confirm the customer confusion:

- About one-quarter of customers mistakenly think plant-based products that mimic cheese contain milk.
- About one-third of customers think that plant-based imitation cheese contains protein, and 21 percent think that it is of a higher quality than dairy even though the imitations have little to no protein. Real dairy cheese has 7 grams of protein.
- About one-quarter of customers purchase plant-based foods that mimic cheese because they believe them to be low in calories and fat and without additives. In reality, these plant-based foods contain an equal or comparable amount of fat and calories and substantially more additives than dairy cheeses