

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Joins Sen. Risch to stand up for America's dairy farmers

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*Bipartisan DAIRY PRIDE Act fights back against non-dairy products that are mislabeled as milk, yogurt and cheese*

*Dairy farmers and producers from across America applaud the reform*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Jim Risch (R-ID) are standing up for American dairy farmers by reintroducing bipartisan legislation today to combat the unfair practice of mislabeling non-dairy products.

The *Defending Against Imitations and Replacements of Yogurt, milk, and cheese to Promote Regular Intake of Dairy Everyday Act (DAIRY PRIDE Act)* would require non-dairy products made from nuts, seeds, plants, and algae to no longer be mislabeled with dairy terms such as milk, yogurt or cheese. The bipartisan legislation is cosponsored by Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Angus King (I-ME), and it has also been introduced in the House today by Representatives Peter Welch (D-VT) and Mike Simpson (R-ID).

Current Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations define dairy products as being from dairy animals. Although existing federal regulations are clear, the FDA has not enforced these labeling regulations and the mislabeling of products as 'milk', 'yogurt' and 'cheese' has increased rapidly. This hurts dairy farmers that work tirelessly to ensure their Made in Wisconsin dairy products meet FDA standards and provide the public with nutritious food. It has also led to the proliferation of mislabeled alternative products that contain a range of ingredients

and nutrients that are often not equivalent to the nutrition content of dairy products.

The *DAIRY PRIDE Act* would require the FDA to issue guidance for nationwide enforcement of mislabeled imitation dairy products within 90 days and require the FDA to report to Congress two years after enactment to hold the agency accountable for this update in their enforcement obligations.

“Dairy farmers in Wisconsin work tirelessly every day to ensure that their milk meets high standards for nutritional value and quality,” **said Senator Baldwin**. “Imitation products have gotten away with using dairy’s good name for their own benefit, which is against the law and must be enforced. Mislabeled plant-based products as ‘milk’ hurts our dairy farmers. That’s why I’m reintroducing the *DAIRY PRIDE Act* to take a stand for Wisconsin farmers and the quality products they make.”

“Idaho’s dairy farmers work hard to meet high FDA standards while others misuse the term “dairy” but aren’t subjected to the same rigorous requirements. This is not right,” **said Senator Risch**. “The nutritional value found in dairy is not replicated by imitation products, and it’s time our labeling requirements reflect that.”

“Maine dairy farmers work hard to produce high-quality, made-in-Maine dairy products, and they should not be faced with unfair competition from imitation products using dairy terms to convey a nutritional equivalency that is not accurate,” **said Senator King**. “By ensuring the FDA enforces its labeling requirements, we can strengthen the Maine dairy industry and help protect the livelihood of Maine farmers.”

“The *DAIRY PRIDE Act* is simply about fairness. Vermont’s hardworking dairy farmers deserve to sell their products on a level playing field, just as consumers deserve to know exactly what they’re putting on the table. In both cases, truth in labeling matters. There can always be room on the shelves for plant-based products, but every Vermonter knows that milk doesn’t come from plants. It’s past time for labels across the country to reflect that,” **said Senator Leahy**.

[Dairy farmers and producers from across the nation are strongly supporting the \*DAIRY PRIDE Act\*:](#)

“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.**

"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.**

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

"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.”

“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.**

“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 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, Cedar Grove, Wis., President of Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative.**

Senator Baldwin has been pressing the FDA to uphold its commitments to dairy farmers and processors who abide by FDA regulations and properly make and label their products, and has called on the agency to take action against companies that don’t follow FDA’s long-standing rules on dairy product labeling. Last spring, [she pressed FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb to act](#), and last fall, he announced he was taking [the first step in this process](#).

Now that the FDA comment period has ended, the agency could move forward in enforcing its regulations. Senator Baldwin and a bipartisan group of Senators also wrote to FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb today to press the agency to move forward quickly to begin enforcing FDA’s Standards of Identity against imitation products that use dairy’s good name for their own benefit. If the agency fails to act, the *DAIRY PRIDE Act* would force them to resolve this issue within 90 days. The letter is available [here](#).

More information on the bipartisan *DAIRY PRIDE Act* is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).