

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: With colleagues, leads effort to protect food producers' access to overseas markets

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GREEN BAY, WI — Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) today co-led a bipartisan letter that calls on the Administration to protect common food and wine terms in future trade discussions. The letter underscores concerns that the European Union misuses protections meant for Geographic Indicators (GI) to enact trade barriers to block American exports, and advocates for a consistent trade policy that prioritizes specific market access assurances for these products in all trade-related discussions.

The lawmakers wrote, "The European Union has used GIs to raise trade barriers for products labeled with common food terms, as well as traditional wine terms. Examples include, but are not limited to, bologna, parmesan, chateau, and feta. We urge the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to draw upon the type of precedents and commitments established in the United States-Canada-Mexico Agreement (USMCA) to further strengthen protections for U.S. producers by negotiating agricultural market access safeguards for products marketed using specific common food terms, traditional terms, or legitimate plant and grape varieties in all future U.S. trade negotiations, particularly those of importance to U.S. cheese, meat, and wine producers." The letter, addressed to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, is part of an effort to ensure that American farmers and food producers have access to fair trade rules overseas.

"This issue - keeping common cheese names available around the world - is crucial to the growth of Wisconsin's \$46 billion dairy farming and dairy manufacturing industry. Generations of Wisconsin cheesemakers craft cheese styles that rival or best European cheeses in international competitions. Cheese styles and names in use for decades, if not centuries, should not be taken away from America's dairy industry as we build successful trade in global markets," said John Umhoefer, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association.

Reps. Jim Costa (D-CA), Jodey Arrington (R-TX), Angie Craig (D-MN), Dusty Johnson (R-SD), Ron Kind (D-WI), Mike Kelly (R-PA), and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) joined Rep. Gallagher in leading the letter, which was signed by more than 100 members of the House.

The letter can be found [here](#) and full text of the letter is below:

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer and Secretary Perdue:

The current global crisis has put a spotlight on the importance of advancing fairer trade

rules in order to keep American-made food products moving reliably to markets overseas. We are writing today to underscore our concerns about a campaign by the European Union to misuse protections meant for geographical indications (GI) and to restrict the use of traditional wine terms in order to block competition from accurately labeled U.S. food and wine exports. This is a critical issue that erodes U.S. access to key markets overseas and poses a serious threat to the economic health of farmers, ranchers, food and beverage manufacturers, and exporters here at home.

The European Union has used GIs to raise trade barriers for products labeled with common food terms, as well as traditional wine terms. Examples include, but are not limited to, bologna, parmesan, chateau, and feta. We urge the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to draw upon the type of precedents and commitments established in the United States-Canada-Mexico Agreement (USMCA) to further strengthen protections for U.S. producers by negotiating agricultural market access safeguards for products marketed using specific common food terms, traditional terms, or legitimate plant and grape varieties in all future U.S. trade negotiations, particularly those of importance to U.S. cheese, meat, and wine producers. We view ongoing negotiations with the United Kingdom and Kenya as opportunities to further strengthen the U.S. position on common food names and traditional wine terms. Without decisive action to build further upon the progress made to date on intellectual

property measures, the European Union will continue to raise unfair trade barriers and seek to establish harmful GI policies in negotiations with our trading partners. It is, therefore, critical that USTR and USDA advance a consistent trade policy that prioritizes securing specific market access assurances for products that use common food terms, traditional terms, or the names of legitimate plant and grape varieties in all trade-related discussions.

On behalf of the farmers, ranchers, food and beverage manufacturers, and exporters we

represent, thank you for the work that you have already accomplished on this issue. We look forward to working alongside your offices to further strengthen protections for food and wine producers.

Sincerely,