

# Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative: Applauds bill to stop misleading non-dairy labels

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GREEN BAY, Wis. — Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative, one of the largest dairy co-ops in the country, applauded the reintroduction today of federal legislation that would combat the misleading labeling of imitation dairy products.

[The DAIRY PRIDE Act](#), reintroduced in the Senate by Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., and Jim Risch, R-Idaho, 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 bill also would require the Food and Drug Administration to issue guidance for nationwide enforcement of mislabeled products. Current regulations define dairy products as being from dairy animals, but the FDA has not enforced the rule.

“Research has shown that customers are confused by the way dairy imitations are presented in the marketplace. Mislabeling is not tolerated in most sectors of the economy, but it is pervasive in the dairy aisle,” Edge President Brody Stapel said. “It’s frustrating to see the inaction by the FDA to correct the problem.”

“We are excited to see Senator Baldwin re-introduce this bill, telling the makers of plant-based imitations that they need to play by the rules, while supporting real dairy products produced by Wisconsin’s farmers and processors,” Stapel said.

A companion bill is being introduced in the House.

Edge has long advocated for the FDA to enforce the existing regulations. A national survey co-commissioned by the cooperative found that customers are confused

about whether imitation cheese products are indeed dairy foods and whether they carry the same nutritional value.

Some of the findings:

- One-quarter of customers mistakenly think plant-based products labeled as cheese contain milk.
- One-third of customers believe that the products contain 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.
- One-quarter of customers purchase imitation cheeses 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.