

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Fights for cranberry inclusion in definition of healthy foods

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WASHINGTON – On Tuesday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) joined a bipartisan group of twenty-eight House Members and Senators urging the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to amend its proposed definition of “healthy,” which would exclude most cranberry and tart cherry products. As the nation’s leading producer of cranberries — harvesting 59 percent of the country’s crop — Wisconsin producers would be negatively impacted by the FDA’s proposed rule.

“Cranberries and tart cherries are unique due to their low intrinsic sugar content – that is, they are not naturally sweet. Due to both cranberries and tart cherries lack of intrinsic sugar content, they require sweetening to increase palatability for most consumers. However, there is ample research indicating that the human body does not distinguish between sugars intrinsic in fruit versus those added to fruit products. In fact, the FDA has acknowledged these findings on numerous occasions, stating that “...added sugars are not chemically different from naturally occurring sugars...” and that “...the body’s response to sugars does not depend on whether they are naturally present in food or added to foods” **the members explained.**

“Decades of research demonstrate that these fruits can be part of a healthy, nutrient-rich diet, and can play an important role in improving the diets of many Americans. Cranberries, and cranberry products, contribute bioactive polyphenols to the diet. These compounds found within the fruit are important sources of antioxidants, which can help combat oxidative stress. There are also scientific findings indicating that these unique elements may support gut health, reduce certain risk factors associated with cardiovascular diseases, and reduce the risk of certain recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs),” **the members continued.**

Sen. Johnson was joined on the letter by Senators Mike Lee (R-Utah), Mitt Romney (R-Utah), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Edward Markey (D-Mass.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Gary Peters (D-Mich.) and Representatives Tom Tiffany (R-Wis.), Bill Keating (D-Mass.), Mark Pocan (D-Wis.), Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.), Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.), James McGovern (D-Mass.), Jake Auchincloss (D-Mass.), Lori Trahan (D-Mass.), Seth Moulton (D-Mass.), Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.), Richard Neal (D-Mass.), Katherine Clark (D-Mass.), Susan Wild (D-Pa.), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), Andy Kim (D-N.J.), Jefferson Van Drew (D-N.Y.), Josh Gottheimer (D-N.Y.), Blake Moore (R-Utah), Burgess Owens (R-Utah), John Curtis (R-Utah) and Chris Stewart (R-Utah).

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#).