

# U.S. Rep. Van Orden: Bipartisan legislators introduce DAIRY PRIDE Act

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, Rep. Derrick Van Orden (WI-03) joined Reps. John Joyce M.D. (PA-13), Ann Kuster (NH-02), Angie Craig (MN-02), Mike Simpson (ID-02), and Joe Courtney (CT-02) in introducing the bipartisan DAIRY PRIDE Act, which will prevent non-dairy products from using a dairy label and misaligning nutrient-scant products with the nutritious dairy products produced by America’s farmers.

**“Milk comes from a mammal - it is that simple,”** said Van Orden. **“The nutritional value of whole milk for child development and as an integral part of a healthy diet throughout life cannot be overstated. Our dairy farmers work incredibly hard to produce quality products and consumers deserve to know what they are purchasing and consuming. The DAIRY PRIDE act will serve both these purposes admirably.”**

Specifically, *The Defending Against Imitations and Replacements of yogurt, milk, and Cheese to Promote Regular Intake of Dairy Everyday Act* (DAIRY PRIDE Act) of 2023 would require products derived from seeds, plants, algae, and nuts to no longer be mislabeled with dairy terms such as milk, yogurt, and cheese. Plant-based products have completely different nutritional values, and allowing these products to camouflage otherwise is unacceptable to our farming communities and the families they feed.

The DAIRY PRIDE Act has enjoyed broad support from agricultural organizations in Wisconsin and across the nation.

**Kevin Krentz, President, Wisconsin Farm Bureau:** *“Consumers choose milk*

*because it is a trusted label associated with quality and nutrition. This trust has been built over generations of Wisconsin dairy farmers who take pride in producing a quality product with regulations that reflect that quality. Plant-based milk alternatives are not milk. They aren't held to the same regulations and therefore should not be labeled as milk. If federal agencies are going to ignore their own regulations, Congress must act to force compliance and protect farmers. Wisconsin Farm Bureau is in full support of Congressman Derrick Van Orden working to reintroduce the DAIRY PRIDE Act, which would force the FDA to abide by their own definitions."*

**Zippy Duvall, President, American Farm Bureau Federation:** *"Dairy farmers work hard to earn the trust of America's families by producing healthy affordable products. The DAIRY PRIDE Act is a positive step toward ensuring labels at the supermarket accurately represent the items consumers decide to put on their tables. Families deserve to be fully informed on the products they purchase."*

**John Umhoefer, Executive Director, Wisconsin Cheese Makers**

**Association:** *"Words hold meaning, and people expect that products labeled as milk or cheese will offer them the taste and nutrition that only real dairy can. The Food & Drug Administration is letting consumers down with its new draft guidance, allowing the makers of plant-based imitators to co-opt these defined terms - and dairy's hard-earned reputation to boost sales. Dairy processors thank U.S. Representative Derrick Van Orden and the bipartisan Congressional coalition championing the DAIRY PRIDE Act to provide labeling accuracy in the marketplace and clear, necessary direction to federal regulators."*

**Cindy Leitner, President, Wisconsin Dairy Alliance:** *"Consumers deserve truth and transparency in the labeling of the products they consume. Dairy farmers are struggling daily to continue to feed the world and face another threat from the improper labeling of non-dairy products as 'milk'. We applaud the authors, like Congressman Van Orden, for standing up for consumers and dairy farmers alike."*

**Darin Von Ruden, President, Wisconsin Farmers Union:** *"Misleading labeling confuses consumers and puts dairy farmers at a disadvantage. It is time we clear up the misleading misnomers in American food labeling, recognize that 'milk' originates from mammals, and acknowledge that items masquerading as such are often not nutritionally interchangeable. Diluting the integrity of the term 'milk' sours consumers' ability to make informed nutrition decisions at the grocery store."*

**Steve Etko, Policy Director, Midwest Dairy Coalition:** *“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 Food and Drug Administration’s own rules make it clear that the term “milk” on product labels can only be used on dairy products. Unfortunately, FDA has chosen not to enforce their own rules. The DAIRY PRIDE Act will help ensure that products labeled as milk are indeed dairy products. Consumers and dairy farmers alike will be the beneficiaries of this effort.”*

**John Rettler, President, Tin Valley Farms, Neosho, Wisconsin, and FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative:** *“Consumers deserve to be treated with respect, transparency, and provided with clear and accurate food labels on the food they buy. Further, our dairy farmers deserve recognition for producing such a wholesome, quality product. Milk is clearly defined by the FDA, and this definition should be enforced.”*

**Brody Stapel, President, Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative:** *“We appreciate Rep. Van Orden taking a leadership role with the introduction of the DAIRY PRIDE Act in the House today. Dairy farmers across the nation deserve fair treatment of their products in the marketplace. FDA’s recent draft guidance on milk alternatives highlights that this issue won’t go away without congressional action. We are pleased to see Rep. Van Orden step up in his first couple months in office to support the dairy industry. We look forward to working with the congressman to ensure FDA enforces their own regulations.”*

**Kim Bremmer, Executive Director, Venture Dairy Cooperative:** *“For far too long we have been asking FDA to merely enforce their own standards of identity when it comes to the labeling of milk and dairy. Everyday consumers have been led to believe that all things labeled ‘milk’ carry equal nutrition to dairy milk, which simply isn’t true. It’s absurd that our own government agency continues to fuel the circle of misinformation.”*

**Quote from Jeff Lyon, General Manager, FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative:** *“For years FarmFirst has been engaged on the issue to require FDA to enforce milk standards of identity, which prohibit using dairy terms on non-dairy products. We commend the bill sponsors for their efforts to hold the FDA accountable through the reintroduction of the Dairy Pride Act. It’s extremely frustrating that FDA’s recently released dairy draft guidance contradicts their own regulation and definitions, allowing non-dairy products to use dairy names.”*

**Steve Schlangen, Member-Owner and Chairman of the Board, Associated Milk Producers Incorporated:** *“As a dairy farmer, milk is my brand. It conveys a product packed with good-for-you nutrition. Products attempting to imitate milk and other dairy products through deceptive labeling are misleading consumers. FDA should enforce regulations meant to uphold the standards of identity of dairy products.”*