



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Sen. Howard Marklein, Rep. Travis Tranel and Rep. Loren Oldenburg highlight Truth In Food Labeling Legislation *Legislators joined by industry experts and leaders to promote bills*

MADISON— State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green), State Representatives Travis Tranel (R-Cuba City) and Loren Oldenburg (R-Viroqua) highlighted their Truth in Food Labeling Legislation for milk, meat and dairy products in advance of a hearing in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Revenue and Financial Institutions today.

- Senate Bill (SB) 466 and Assembly Bill (AB) 516 - Milk Labeling
- SB 464, AB 518 – Meat Labeling
- SB 463, AB 515 – Dairy Product Labeling

They were joined by industry experts and leaders including Tom Crave, the owner of Crave Brothers Farm in Waterloo and the President of the Dairy Business Association; Matt Ludlow, Partner of Rush Creek Ranch in Viroqua, President-elect of the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association and Dave Buholzer, Co-Owner of Klondike Cheese Company in Monroe and President of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association.

"Our districts are some of the most agriculture-dependent districts in Wisconsin," Marklein said. "I consistently hear from farmers who are growing increasingly frustrated with the number of imitation products that are on the market for consumers. I want consumers to know the differences between the real, nutritious products grown and made by our farmers versus the fake, lab-grown, plant-based products that are passing for milk, meat, cheese, ice cream and other dairy products in our state."

"It is so important that we help our struggling farmers. This legislation is a relatively simple, common-sense way we can support not only our farmers, but also raise awareness for our consumers who often don't know the difference between real milk and plant juice," Tranel said. "Farmers are already suffering from unstable milk prices, they shouldn't have to compete with misleadingly labeled products as well."

"These bills protect farmers and consumers. Consumers know exactly what they are buying, and the quality food that farmers have worked hard to prepare is accurately labeled," Oldenburg said.

"Dairy farmers spend millions of dollars each year promoting milk and other dairy products through mandatory checkoff programs," Crave said. "The makers of plant-based beverages and dairy product imitations use terms like milk and cheese on their labels to take advantage of the significant investment dairy farmers have made without shouldering any of the costs. This is unfair to our farmers and misleading for consumers. It must stop."

“The Wisconsin Cattlemen’s Association fully supports the legislature’s effort to establish guidelines for the clear labeling of alternative meat products. The beef industry has spent a significant amount of time, effort, and money establishing and maintaining a wholesome, nutritious, and safe product that our farmers and ranchers work to produce every day,” Ludlow said. “SB 464 will set forth guidelines that help protect the integrity of our product and alleviate consumer confusion when purchasing plant based or cell cultured alternative proteins. We applaud the legislature’s initiative to put Wisconsin ahead of the curve when it comes to the labeling of fake meat products.”

“Real, dairy cheese is not only delicious, but also an outstanding natural source of protein, calcium, vitamins and minerals. When plant-based imitators use the term ‘cheese’ on their labels, studies show many consumers are led to believe they offer the same nutritional benefits, which is often not true,” Buholzer said. “Senator Marklein and Representative Tranel are leading an effort to protect dairy names from misuse, and to offer everyone greater clarity as they choose what to eat and how to feed their families.”

“We know these bills aren’t a silver-bullet that will solve the problems for our ag-economy, but they are something we can do to protect and promote real agriculture products to consumers,” Marklein said. “These bills will also put pressure on the federal government to take action on existing food labeling regulations that aren’t being enforced.”

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