



**WISCONSIN  
CHEESE MAKERS  
ASSOCIATION**  
EST. 1891



For more information, please contact:

Rebekah Sweeney, 608-386-3012 or [rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org](mailto:rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org)

Chad Zuleger, 608-345-6906 or [czuleger@dairyforward.org](mailto:czuleger@dairyforward.org)

NEWS RELEASE

June 21, 2021

## **Wisconsin Agricultural Advocates Urge Assembly, Senate Action on Truth-in-Food Labeling Bills**

MADISON, WI – Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA), Dairy Business Association (DBA) and 11 other agricultural advocacy organizations today called for quick action to approve three bills designed to protect consumers from misleading labels on imitation “dairy” and “meat” products.

In a [letter delivered today](#), just ahead of an Assembly vote, the groups encouraged Wisconsin lawmakers to “act now to protect American consumers and to defend the state’s \$105 billion agriculture community,” noting they represent more than 2,800 dairy farmers and processors and 14,000 beef producers.

Assembly Bill 73/Senate Bill 81 and Assembly 74/Senate Bill 83 would prohibit the labeling of food as milk or as a dairy product or ingredient, if the food is not made from the milk of a cow or other hooved mammal. The bills would bring Wisconsin in line with existing but currently unenforced U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations defining these products.

“It’s critical that consumers understand exactly what they’re buying, and offering to their families,” said John Umhoefer, WCMA Executive Director. “While soy- and nut-based products mimic milk, they cannot deliver the same nutritional benefits.”

A recent consumer study, sponsored in part by WCMA and DBA, showed that one-quarter of people believe real milk is present in plant-based foods that mimic cheese. One-third of those studied think plant-based mimics contain protein, though imitators have little to no protein. One-quarter think plant-based mimics are lower in calories or fat, and have fewer additives, but neither perception is true.

Assembly Bill 75/Senate Bill 82 would prohibit labeling plant-based meat alternatives and cell-cultured meat alternatives as “meat” or a similar term.

“This package of bills will promote clarity in the consumer marketplace, as well as fairness for dairy farmers, dairy processors and beef producers who have worked for generations to establish reputations for delivering safe, nutritious and delicious foods,” said Amy Penterman, DBA President.

The Assembly Committee on Agriculture advanced the three proposals in April, and a vote is scheduled in the full Assembly on Tuesday, June 22. The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Tourism approved of the bills in February, but a full floor vote has not yet been scheduled. All of the bills enjoy bipartisan, bicameral support.



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In addition to WCMA and DBA, the legislative letter calling for support of the truth-in-food labeling package of bills is signed by Cooperative Network, GrassWorks, Inc., Midwest SouthEastern Equipment Dealers Association, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Agri-Business Association, Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, Wisconsin Dairy Products Association, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, Wisconsin Farmers Union, and Wisconsin Pork Association.

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