



News Release

2107 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22201
703.243.6111 | www.nmpf.org

"Connecting Cows, Cooperatives, Capitol Hill, and Consumers"

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Christopher Galen
(703) 243-6111 ext. 356
CGalen@nmpf.org

Congressional Spending Bill Includes DAIRY PRIDE Act Language in Victory for Milk Labeling Standards

ARLINGTON, VA – The congressional spending bill approved today in the House and awaiting final vote in the Senate directs the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to take action against mislabeled imitation dairy foods, representing a major victory for farmers and consumers alike, according to the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF).

The massive omnibus spending bill to fund the government for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2018 includes report language instructing FDA to enforce labeling standards affecting dairy imitators. NMPF said the omnibus language builds on the DAIRY PRIDE Act (DPA), a bipartisan bill introduced last year in both chambers of Congress to compel FDA to act against misbranded imitations.

"It's high time that we end the blatant disregard for federal labeling standards by marketers of nutritionally inferior imitation dairy products," said Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF. "The language in the congressional budget bill will help ensure action on the matter by FDA after years and years of inaction. This measure is clear and unequivocal that honest labeling matters to Congress and consumers, and that FDA can no longer turn a blind eye toward fake foods that deliberately flout federal standards of identity."

The omnibus provision expresses Congress' concern that certain plant-based beverages are not properly labeled. Given the existing definition of milk as a product of a dairy animal, NMPF said that Congress' instructions to FDA should restrict the ability of beverages made from plant foods from using the term "milk" on their labels. This will also affect products misusing other dairy food names such as "cheese" and "yogurt" that are defined in the Code of Federal Regulations and cited in the congressional bill.

The congressional directive to FDA "will stem the flagrant misuse of the word 'milk' on products that are, by FDA's own definition, not milk nor are made from milk." Mulhern said. "Real milk is well-known for its strong nutritional contributions, which is why the fake food marketers want so badly to continue using dairy terms on dozens of different plant powder formulations. But these products are pale

replicas, not an acceptable substitute for real milk from a nutritional standpoint. This measure will help end the confusion that just co-opting a word somehow makes a food nutritionally equivalent,” he said.

NMPF has worked since early 2017 with members of both the House and Senate on a bipartisan basis to build support on Capitol Hill for the DPA provisions. The language in the omnibus bill gives FDA 180 days from the date of enactment of the measure to issue guidance for how the dairy standards will be implemented and enforced.

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The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF’s cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF’s activities, visit our website at www.nmpf.org.