



News Release

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

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Survey: Only 1-in-5 Consumers Think Plant-Based Imitators Should be Called Milk

ARLINGTON, Va. – With only six days to go before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) comment period on fake milks ends, new consumer research shows Americans widely disapprove of dairy terms being appropriated by fake-milk producers, as well as confusion on the nutritional content of milk versus plant-based imitators, offering further evidence that FDA must enforce long-existing standards of identity on dairy imposters.

The national survey conducted by IPSOS, a global market research and consulting firm, found:

- Only **20 percent** of all consumers said plant-based beverages should be labeled milk, as U.S. dietary guidelines do not recommend imitators as a substitute for dairy milk; even when limited to buyers of plant-based drinks, support for mislabeling rose to only **41 percent**.
- About **50 percent** of consumers mistakenly perceive that the main ingredient of a plant-based beverage is the plant itself; such drinks are mostly flavored water.
- **More than one-third** of consumers erroneously believe plant-based beverages have the same or more protein than dairy milk. Milk has up to eight times more protein than its imitators.

"This new data is more proof that the plant-based food and beverage industry is exploiting consumer confusion to boost their bottom line, and consumers don't like it," said Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF). "Plant-based beverage brands that sell nutritionally inferior products under the health halo of milk mislead consumers. FDA must enforce its existing regulations."

The new data builds on [previous surveys](#), including one from August showing that 53 percent of all consumers said they believed that plant-based food manufacturers labeled their products "milk" because their nutritional value is similar, even though products widely vary in content. An October poll [found one-quarter](#) of consumers either thought almond drinks contained cow's milk or weren't sure. Meanwhile, a January survey found consumers, by nearly a [3-to-1 margin](#), calling for FDA to end the mislabeling of fake milks.

The online IPSOS poll – commissioned by Dairy Management Inc. – was conducted Oct. 30-31, 2018, and surveyed 2,006 adults nationwide. Full results are available [here](#), under "Phase II."

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