



# News Release

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

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## **NMPF Again Reminds Food and Drug Administration That Food Packages Need To Be Properly Labeled With Appropriate Product Names**

NMPF Letter Part of Ongoing Effort To Stop Use of "Milk," "Yogurt" On Imitation Dairy Foods

ARLINGTON, VA – As part of its continuing effort to prompt the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to crack down on improperly labeled imitation dairy products, the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) [submitted comments today](#) asking the FDA to scrutinize whether the packaging of such foods is giving consumers accurate information.

The FDA is in the process of accepting public comments on what types of point-of-purchase nutrition information, including the product labels on the packages, as well as store shelf tags, should be conveyed to shoppers. In its comments to FDA, NMPF stressed that the actual name of the food on the package – one of the most basic pieces of information that appears on every packaged food – does impact consumers' food purchasing decisions, and conveys crucial nutritional information about the product.

"Consumers expect dairy products, like milk and yogurt, to contain specific nutrients," said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of NMPF. "And, by extension, when they see a plant-based product with 'milk' or 'yogurt' in its name, they expect those products to contain protein, vitamins, and minerals that are equivalent to their dairy counterparts," he said.

However, plant-based foods and beverages naturally do not contain the same nutrients as dairy foods, and must be fortified. A survey of commercial products by NMPF revealed that, even with fortification, there was significant variability among the nutrient profiles of the plant-based products, and all were inferior to the dairy foods they were trying to imitate.

In its letter, NMPF reported that the average consumer spends less than 15 seconds looking at food packages before making a purchasing decision. Instead of making detailed comparisons of Nutrition Facts panels, many consumers rely on images, visual cues, and text on the front of the package, including the name of the food, to evaluate the nutrient content of the product. NMPF emphasized this type of consumer behavior is important to consider, especially when the product is a non-dairy alternative inappropriately using dairy terminology in its name, like "soy milk" or "rice yogurt."

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Today's letter to FDA on package labeling is NMPF's latest effort [to draw attention to the lack of compliance](#) of misbranded plant-based imitation dairy products. Back in April, NMPF [sent a lengthy letter](#) to the FDA to protest the misbranding of imitation dairy products.

According to NMPF, consumers "don't understand the regulations surrounding standards of identity, but they recognize the health benefits of dairy foods" Kozak said.

These nutritionally inferior, formulated plant-based imitators "are trying to use the dairy halo of good health by incorporating dairy terminology into the names of their foods. But they are defrauding the consumer by misrepresenting the true nutrient content of these imitation products," NMPF wrote.

The National Milk Producers Federation, 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 30 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 40,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies.