

DATE: February 9, 2021

TO: Chairperson Ballweg and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Tourism

FROM: Debi Towns, Sr. Director of Government Relations  
WI Farm Bureau Federation

RE: Support for Senate Bills 81, 82, & 83 – Truth in labeling for Dairy Products, Meat and Milk

Good morning and thank you for this opportunity to speak on Senate Bills 81, 82, and 83 relating to the labeling of Dairy Products, Meat and Milk, respectively. I will talk about all three in this testimony as the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation is supporting all three bills and our rationale is the same for all three bills.

As food producers in an international marketplace, many of our members strive very hard to provide high-quality products which are recognized by that market. Among these products are fluid milk, dairy products originating from milk and meat.

Over decades, Wisconsin farmers have established a reputation in the marketplace, both domestically and internationally, for their products using the accepted definitions of “milk, dairy and meat”. The consumer could rely on these accepted definitions and confidently know that if they were purchasing “milk” it was produced by a mammal and that the label “dairy” meant the product originated with milk. Consumers also knew that if they purchased a product identified as “meat”, it originated from the flesh of animal. Consumers also know these terms are identified with quality & safety but most of all nutritional value.

At Farm Bureau, we are well aware that food product labeling is governed overall at the federal level by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA). The purpose for bringing these bills before the Wisconsin legislature at this time is to encourage Wisconsin to recognize the value of the marketplace trust our farmers have spent years building and join with other states whose food producers also rely on the accepted terminology in the markets as they currently discuss this same issue. We are anticipating that the FDA will need to take up this issue at some point in the future, and when that happens, we would like Wisconsin agriculture to be positioned to join with those who stand to protect the food markets we have worked so hard to establish.