



Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania
*Seeking to Advance the Dairy Industry in Pennsylvania
Through Improved Productivity and Profitability.*

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Dear Legislator,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors for the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania and our membership of dairy farmers and industry suppliers.

Both as dairy professionals and as a concerned consumers, we want to express our support for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's recent actions enforcing existing regulations on the use of misleading labels on milk and dairy products. The labels they cited are based on deception, with claims the PDA found are "inaccurate or that cannot be verified." Some companies are using this type of labeling to make their product appear superior, when in reality there is no difference between these "specialty" products and the milk people have been buying for generations.

We believe in straight-talk and words like "antibiotic-free" or "no artificial hormones added" are deceiving to the consumer and erode the wholesome image many consumers have of dairy products. They also erode the access Americans have to a high quality, abundant, and affordable food supply. Milk and dairy products are tested many times to ensure they do not contain any antibiotics or other harmful substances.

The hormone bST, found naturally in all milk, is supplemented to some cows to aide in milk production. It is a protein hormone, not a steroid, and was approved by the Food and Drug Administration only after being found completely safe on three levels – to the consumer buying the milk produced by the cow, to the cow herself, and to the environment. In fact, countless studies have proven that milk from cows receiving the supplement is absolutely no different than milk produced by cows that don't receive it.

This supplement is one of many technologies that have allowed dairy farmers like the members of PDMP to keep milk pricing within the means of the consumer by producing more milk with fewer cows. Since 1950, our nation has increased total milk production in the nation by 50 percent with 90 percent fewer farms and 62 percent fewer cows. Decreasing the number of cows reduces the amount of resources such as water, feed, land, and fuel that it takes to supply our nation with dairy products. Fewer cows also means less manure and greenhouse gas production, helping us take better care of the environment.

The processing companies using "absence-based" labels are simply employing a marketing strategy that seems to be more profit driven than by concern for the consumer. They often charge more for these products that years of testing have proven are no different from traditional dairy products. Many of these companies are keeping all the extra income they receive, so that the farmers they are forcing to discard this useful and safe production tool do not see any benefit.

The milk produced by our state's dairy farmers is one of the most naturally nutrient-dense products available on the marketplace today. It provides calcium and eight other essential nutrients, and it has been found to combat many diseases, including osteoporosis, high blood pressure, and colon cancer.

PDMP Supports PDA Action for Accurate Milk Labeling

Should any mother be forced to decide if she can afford to give her children what is currently one of the least expensive sources of nutrition available?

Pennsylvania's dairy farmers have a well-earned reputation for integrity in product delivery and for honesty in our dealings, whether it is in relationships, business, or milk labeling. The labels in question and others that imply that some milk is "safer" than others are disingenuous and mislead the consumer. They contradict values for which generations of dairy producers have stood strong.

PDMP extends its gratitude to Secretary Dennis Wolff and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for the decision to stop misleading milk labeling and we call on the entire Pennsylvania state legislature to join the state's dairy producers in insuring that our Commonwealth's consumers are protected from such deception.

Sincerely,

Logan Bower
President of PDMP
Owner of Pleasant View Farms
Blain, PA

Alan Novak
Executive Director of PDMP