

2013 Assembly Joint Resolution 113

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: the registration of geographic indications pertaining to dairy terms traditionally used generically in the United States and worldwide.

Whereas, Wisconsin leads the United States in annual total cheese production; and

Whereas, dairy plays a critical role in the Wisconsin economy and accounts for approximately half of total state agricultural receipts; and

Whereas, United States cheese exports have steadily increased throughout the years, reaching a new record of \$183 million last year and growing by over 70 percent in just the past two years; and

Whereas, foreign governments, specifically the European Union, are seeking to limit competition from U.S. companies, particularly in value-added areas such as cheese, by restricting the use of commonly used product terms through the registration of improper geographic indications; and

Whereas, product names commonly used in Wisconsin that already face bans on their usage in certain world markets include Asiago, feta, fontina, Gorgonzola, Grana, Gruyère, Muenster, Neufchâtel, and Parmesan; and

Whereas, other product names that are also at risk of being banned include Brie, Camembert, Cheddar, Edam, Emmental, Gouda, mozzarella, pecorino, and provolone; and

Whereas, as a result, serious concerns exist that the abuse of geographic indication applications targeting commonly used cheese names threatens the continued expansion of Wisconsin cheese exports and threatens the expansion of new markets for the entire \$59 billion Wisconsin agriculture industry; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the legislature urges U.S. trade negotiators to combat inappropriate restrictions on the use of common food names, where those barriers to trade and commerce take the form of geographic indications or other similarly unjustified regulatory impediments.

Senator Michael G. Ellis
President of the Senate

Representative Robin J. Vos
Speaker of the Assembly

Date

Patrick E. Fuller
Assembly Chief Clerk