



May 14, 2019

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of American companies making great Made-In-America cheeses every day, I am writing to seek your assistance on a glaring inequity concerning cheese sales between the United States and the European Union. We know you are concerned about trade imbalances with our trading partners, as well as with the ability of U.S. companies to prosper and compete in a global marketplace. This issue bears both these problems.

We are very much aware of the Administration's strong focus on tackling several major trade issues in order to address unfair treatment of U.S. farmers and companies by our trading partners. As you continue to fight for the United States, we ask that you keep in mind the deep inequity of opportunity that exists in our food trade with Europe, as it is a key priority to U.S. cheese producers, as well as to thousands of American farmers.

Many U.S. cheese companies, like the one I created when I came to this great country, make award-winning products but are barred from selling popular cheeses such as parmesan and asiago into the European Union due to the EU's excessively protectionist policies on geographical indications (GIs). Specifically, U.S. companies that make cheeses with the generic names asiago, feta, fontina, gorgonzola, grana, muenster, parmesan and romano cannot market their products by those names in the EU – period.

What is truly aggravating is that while we are shut out of their enormous market, which includes some of the highest cheese-consuming nations in the world, the U.S. allows EU companies to sell *their* cheeses with these names into our lucrative U.S. market – competing with us for our own U.S. consumers. Europeans can sell their asiago, parmesan, feta, etc., in Wisconsin, but cheesemakers like me are blocked from selling Wisconsin cheeses by the same names in Europe.

The result: Europeans enjoy close to \$1 billion in sales of their cheeses into the United States, competing with us on our own shores – we're their number one export market! – while they block out competition from the U.S. within the EU, contributing to a massive \$1.6 billion U.S.-EU dairy trade deficit.

This problem continues to get worse, not better. On May 27th, the EU is scheduled to vote on and likely approve a GI for another generic cheese name – havarti – which will now block U.S. sales in the EU of this popular variety, as well. What's more, restricting use of the generic name "havarti" as a GI will completely disregard the international Codex standard the EU helped approve just over a decade ago, further disrespecting established agreements meant to ensure fair and orderly international trade.



The United States is an extremely profitable dairy market for the EU; we must leverage that power in correcting this deeply frustrating inequity. I urge you to utilize all available tools to remedy this situation. Let us at least consider imposing the same restriction on them that they do on us: require that they not sell cheeses by these names into our market, as long as we are locked out of theirs.

Sincerely,



Errico Auricchio
Chairman, Consortium for Common Food Names
President, Belgioioso Cheese

cc: The Honorable Robert Lighthizer, U.S. Trade Representative
The Honorable Sonny Perdue, U.S. Department of Agriculture