

## Cheesehead Trademark Beats Death

A trademark can be a powerful thing. Just ask a group of doctors trying to dissuade Wisconsin residents from enjoying their beloved cheese.



Wisconsin is well known for its cheese and Green Bay Packers fans are known for wearing foam cheeseheads (hats shaped like a wedge of cheese) at football games to show their support for their favorite NFL team. In fact, hundreds of the bright yellow faux cheese hats can be seen in the stands of every Packers home game. Those foam cheeseheads are produced by Foamation, Inc., which also owns several U.S. trademark registrations for the iconic headgear, and Foamation takes the protection of their trademarks very seriously. Foamation even went so far as to challenge Death when it dared to wear a cheesehead in a billboard warning against the health effects of eating too much cheese.

It seems that a group of well-intentioned Washington physicians, loosely organized under the name Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, made the ill-advised decision this past summer to try and separate Wisconsinites from their cheese. Their method of choice? A series of billboards featuring Death, the black shrouded harbinger of the end of times, wearing a cheesehead and warning that “Cheese Can Sack Your Health. Fat Cholesterol. Sodium.” Unfortunately, the Committee misjudged the locals’ devotion to cheese and Foamation’s protectiveness of its trademarks.

With the prospect of the first billboard defaming cheese and cheeseheads set to go up near historic Lambeau Field, the home of the Green Bay Packers, Foamation threatened legal action. Then, the two sides met in an attempt to resolve their differences and the Committee backed down, agreeing not to adorn the Grim Reaper with a cheese head on the billboard. Still, the billboard decrying cheese in “America’s Dairyland” (a Wisconsin motto) is set to go up with Death’s sobering visage and the warning against cheese consumption. The Committee vowed to leave the cheesehead on Death in images depicted on its website.



It remains to be seen whether the billboard will actually increase cheese consumption amongst those stubborn Wisconsinites and whether Foamation will take legal action against the Committee’s website. Death was unavailable for comment.

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