

Brussels, 25 July 2019

RE: Proposal to ban the use of terms such as ‘veggie burger’ in the EU

Dear Member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development,

May we take this opportunity to warmly congratulate you on your (re)election to the European Parliament, and your appointment to this important Committee.

On 1st April, the Committee on Agriculture of the 8th Legislature voted on the proposal for a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Regulation establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products (2018/0218 COD). In an apparent attempt to undermine the growing success of plant-based alternatives to animal products, an amendment was adopted which seeks to ban plant-based products from using names that have typically been associated with meat products and preparations, such as “steak,” “sausage,” and “burger.” This proposal would have the effect of banning widely-used and widely-understood terms such as ‘veggie burger’. The amendment also proposes to further restrict the naming of dairy alternatives by prohibiting terms such as “yoghurt style”, “cheese imitation”, or “butter substitute.”

European consumers have been accustomed for many years to the use of terms such as “vegan sausage” or “veggie burger” to designate plant-based alternatives to meat. To ban the use of those widely-used terms is unnecessary and would only result in confusing consumers and preventing them from making informed choices while purchasing products. Consequently, this amendment has received [widespread negative coverage](#) in the mainstream international media. Given the serious work expected from the European Parliament during this new mandate on issues such as climate change, seeking to restrict commercial speech and slow the growth of the plant-based market is counterproductive, in particular since numerous studies show the environmental and climate benefits of plant-based diets.

[Petitions](#) against this proposal have already garnered around 80,000 EU citizens’ signatures.

There is no evidence of consumer confusion regarding the naming of plant-based alternatives to animal products; on the contrary, consumers purchase these items *because* they do not contain meat or dairy.

The amendment also goes against consumers’ choices for more sustainable food. Plant-based foods have a significantly lower climate and environmental impact compared to animal-based foods and the CAP should not discourage food choices that align with the need to cut

greenhouse gas emissions, as mandated by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement.

Considering the perfect clarity of the current designation for plant-based products, as well as the risk of the public disapproval regarding this amendment, along with the inconsistencies of the arguments put forward to support this stricter regulation, we respectfully ask you to reject any proposals to restrict the denominations of plant-based products.

We thank you for your support and consideration,

Yours respectfully,

Compassion in World Farming-EU
Eurogroup for Animals
European Environmental Bureau
European Vegetarian Union
FOUR PAWS

Humane Society International/Europe
ProVeg International
SAFE-Safe Food Advocacy Europe
The Good Food Institute Europe
The Vegan Society

