



The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy must not hinder the shift towards more plant-based diets and undermine the Farm to Fork Strategy and the European Green Deal

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Dear Member of the European Parliament,

We are writing to you to express our deep concern about proposed amendments to the Commission's proposal for a Regulation establishing a Common Organisation of the Markets (CMOs) in agricultural products ([2018/0218 COD](#)), which is currently being considered in the European Parliament.

As it presently stands, this CAP report proposed by the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) includes an amendment ([Amendment 165](#)) that would effectively ban widely accepted and commonly used terms, such as 'veggie burger' or 'plant-based steak'. Another amendment ([Amendment 171](#)) would further restrict the naming of dairy alternatives by prohibiting terms, such as 'yoghurt style', 'alternative to cheese' or 'butter substitute' to describe plant-based dairy alternatives. This would directly contradict the EU's objective within the framework of the [European Green Deal](#) to create a more sustainable and healthy food system. Encouraging the broader uptake of plant-based diets is a key means of achieving the European Commission's climate change ambitions, as well as reducing land use and water use and preventing further global biodiversity decline.

The scientific evidence is clear: industrial animal agriculture is a major contributor to [climate change](#), [environmental degradation](#), [public health risks](#), [biodiversity loss](#), and poor animal welfare. In the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), the Commission explicitly acknowledges the need to shift to more plant-based diets with less red and processed meats to reduce the risk of life-threatening diseases and decrease the environmental footprint of the food system. Moreover, the Commission's [Plant Protein Report](#) notes that the market for meat and dairy alternatives is particularly promising, with annual growth rates of 14% and 11%, respectively.

Yet despite growing consumer demand for plant-based products, overwhelming scientific evidence, and the Commission's clear political ambitions, which all favour the shift towards more plant-based diets, the AGRI Committee report goes in the completely opposite direction.

For many years, European consumers have been accustomed to terms such as 'veggie burger' or 'plant-based steak', being used to designate plant-based alternatives to meat. To prohibit the use of such well-recognised terms is unnecessary and would only serve to confuse consumers and prevent them from making informed choices while purchasing products. It also runs the risk of exposing the EU to ridicule as a prime example of superfluous and disproportionate regulation of the internal market.

European consumers overwhelmingly favour the use of meat-related terms for plant-based foods. A recent survey conducted by BEUC in ten Member States shows that more than [68% of consumers](#) support 'meaty' names for plant-based food products, as long as the products are clearly labelled as plant-based or vegetarian. Furthermore, [petitions](#) against the proposed restrictions have already garnered thousands of signatures.

Enhancing consumer clarity without jeopardising the EU's objectives for a healthy and sustainable food system remains possible.

For example, we have no objections to requiring the use of qualifiers for non-meat products, such as "plant-based" or "vegetarian", while reserving the terms with no qualifiers for meat products. Accordingly, "sausages" would have to be made from meat, but "plant-based sausages" could still be used for plant-based alternatives. The use of qualifiers simply provides additional clarity to consumers.

We therefore respectfully urge you to oppose amendments 165 and 171 of the [Report](#) on the European Commission's proposal for a Regulation establishing a Common Organisation of the Markets (CMOs) in agricultural products (2018/0218 COD) during the second plenary session in October 2020.

Should a sensible alternative amendment be put forward that would allow the use of meat and dairy terms for plant-based products as long as they are clearly labelled by appropriate qualifiers, we recommend you to support it. This would also contribute to more coherence between the CAP reform, the European Green Deal, and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

We thank you for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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