

EU Moves to Protect ‘Meat’ Labels in New Agricultural Market Rules

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As the popularity of plant-based foods continues to grow across Europe, regulators are increasingly addressing how alternative products are labelled to ensure transparency for consumers. The Council of the European Union and the European Parliament have now reached a provisional agreement on amendments to key agricultural market rules that include stricter protections for meat-related product names.

The agreement introduces targeted changes to the Common Market Organisation (CMO) regulation and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), with the aim of strengthening farmers’ negotiating power in the agrifood value chain while ensuring clearer product labelling in the market.

One of the most notable provisions establishes rules to protect the use of the term ‘meat’ and a range of meat-related names, including beef, pork, poultry, steak and bacon. Under the proposed rules, these terms will be reserved exclusively for products that contain meat, preventing their use for non-meat products such as plant-based or cell-cultured alternatives.

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Beyond labelling rules, the revised framework also introduces measures to strengthen farmers’ position in the supply chain. A key change will make written contracts between farmers and buyers a general requirement, with provisions such as revision clauses to reflect market developments, cost fluctuations and changing economic conditions in long-term agreements.

The amendments also aim to simplify the legal recognition of producer organisations, allowing them to operate more efficiently and strengthen collective bargaining power. Member states will also be able to provide additional financial support to producer organisations and their associations through CAP sectoral interventions.

Maria Panayiotou, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of Cyprus, said the agreement marks an important step for Europe’s agricultural sector.

‘This agreement represents a meaningful step towards fairer and more resilient agricultural markets. By improving support for farmers and enhancing the role of producer organisations, we are giving farmers additional tools to secure a more predictable and sustainable future,’ she said.

The changes also encourage young and new farmers to join recognised producer organisations, helping strengthen the long-term sustainability of the sector.

The provisional agreement will now need to be formally adopted by both EU institutions before it can enter into force.