

## **UNIONE ITALIANA FOOD**

With 51 billion in turnover, 100,000 employees, 550 companies, 18 billion in exports, 900 brands on Italian tables and more than 20 product sectors represented, **Unione Italiana Food**, a member of Confindustria, is the largest association directly representing product categories in the food sector in Italy.

Among the producers, there are both large multinational food industry groups and companies with an Italian history, many of which have important international projections. Overall, the companies offer a very varied offering in terms of products including a **broad offering of plant-based products**.

### **PLANT BASED PRODUCTS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH FOOD CONSISTING OF, ISOLATED FROM OR PRODUCED FROM CELL CULTURES OR TISSUES DERIVED FROM VERTEBRATE ANIMALS**

**Plant-based products are made from common agricultural raw materials** such as legumes (soy, peas, etc.), grains (oats, rice, etc.), seeds (almond), and vegetables or their protein isolates.

The production process of plant-based products therefore follows that of common foods of plant origin. The result is foods and drinks made with ingredients unanimously considered safe by all food safety authorities and **which have nothing to do with food consisting of, isolated form or produced from cell cultures or tissues**.

### **PROTECTION OF CONSUMER INFORMATION AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IS IN PLACE**

Food law establishes the rights of consumers to have access to safe food and accurate and honest information.

In the European Union, labeling rules allow citizens to obtain comprehensive information on the content and composition of food products.

**At European and national level, food labeling is regulated by Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 relating to the provision of food information to consumers.**

The Regulation establishes the basis that guarantees a high level of consumer protection in relation to food information, taking into account differences in consumer perceptions and their information needs, while ensuring the smooth functioning of the internal market.

### **A CONTINUOUSLY ASSERTING MARKET REALITY WITH CLEAR AND CORRECT INFORMATION TO CONSUMERS**

Although the market for plant-based products has grown significantly in recent years, **the companies belonging to the Unione Italiana Food have been operating in this sector for decades in full compliance with the correctness and transparency of the information provided to the consumer on the characteristics of their products** by responding to a request /need for health reasons (intolerances), ethics (vegetarians, vegans, animal welfare) and environmental protection.

From some recent research conducted on consumers, **it does not appear that consumers are confused by plant based products denomination**; on the contrary, they are generally consumers who read labels and who are very clear about the nature of what they are purchasing. According to a recent quantitative survey by AstraRicerche, approximately 80% of consumers read labels carefully and consider them clear on which ingredients are or are not present, easy to read and understandable, truthful and not misleading.

The European Parliament has also repeatedly reaffirmed the right of plant-based products to use names such as "burger", "cutlets", "vegetable balls", etc. on the label. because they refer to a recipe and/or a form of presentation of a food, not to the origin of the raw material (for this reason, however, we cannot speak of hamburgers because "ham" can be understood as a reference to a specific ingredient not present ). These names, therefore, do not give rise to risks of misunderstanding, also because they are always followed by the specification "vegetable".

**Given the above, we ask to delete from the draft law the part relating to the ban on the use of the name meat for processed products containing vegetable proteins for two reasons:**

**-plant based products have nothing to do with food consisting of, isolated from or produced from cell cultures or tissues derived from vertebrate animals**

**and**

**- plant based products are labelled according to by Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 relating to the provision of food information to consumers. There are no risks of confusion with products of animal origin and therefore there is no need of a specific ban of the use of the name meat for processed products containing vegetable proteins**