



BEUC The European
Consumer
Organisation

The Consumer Voice in Europe

Consumers' growing appetite for sustainable food

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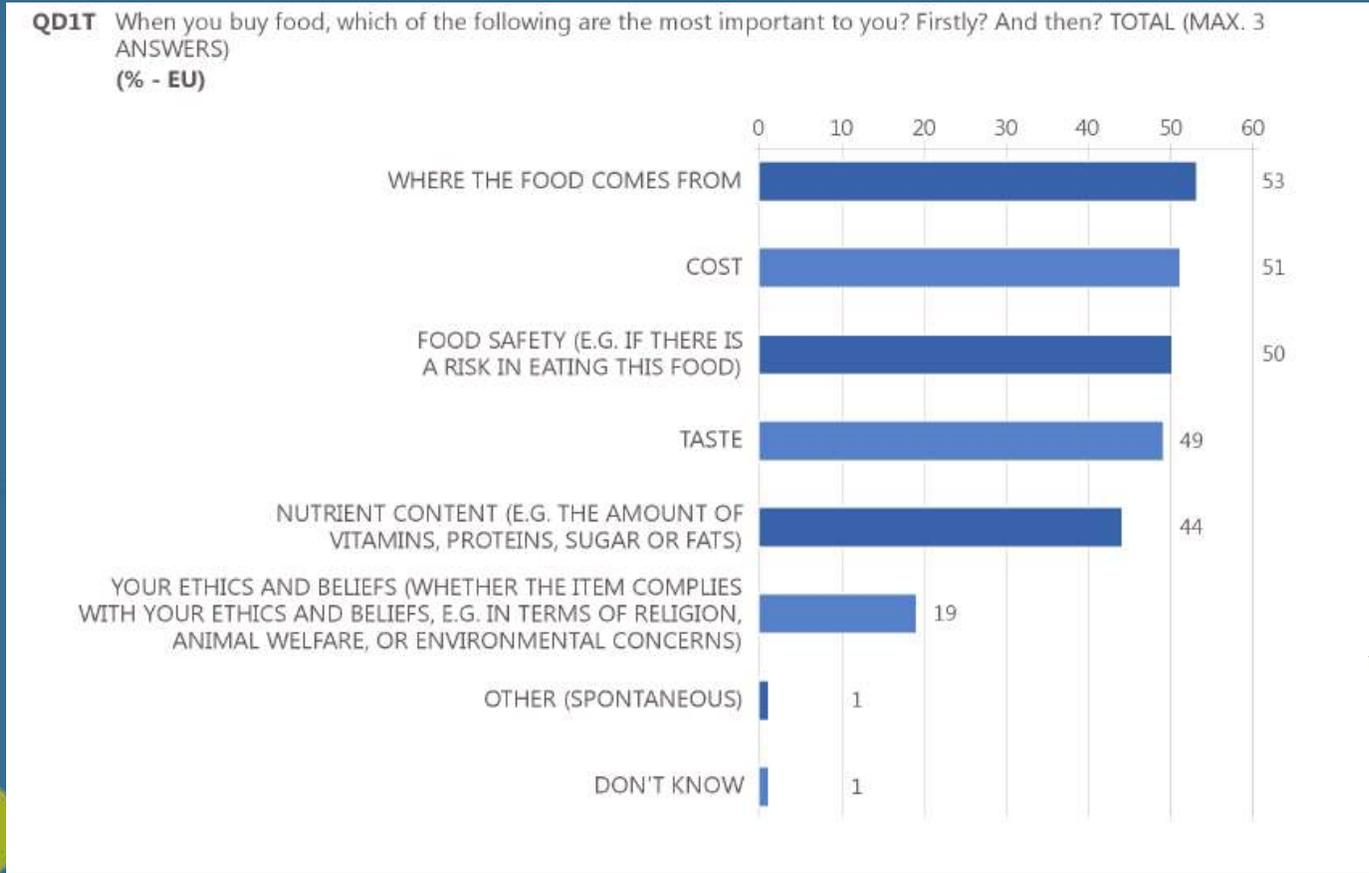


BEUC: who we are and what we do

- The European Consumer Organisation
- A network of 45 independent national consumer organisations from 32 European countries.
- We defend the interests of consumers in EU policy-making and coordinate our members' actions to enforce consumer rights.



What drives consumers' food choices?



Origin
Price
Safety
Taste
Healthfulness
Sustainability & ethics

Source: Special Eurobarometer on Food Safety, June 2019

Consumers and the food system challenges

- Many consumers are unaware of the scale of the challenges the food system faces.
- If told about the problems, they are concerned and want more information about how food is produced and how they can access sustainable and healthier choices.
- Preference for solutions that are low-tech, natural or focused on behaviour change.
- Novel technologies/production processes not rejected out of hand, but need for independent oversight to ensure they are safe, worthwhile and that there are no low-tech alternatives.



Source: Which? and UK Government Office for Science (2015), "[Public Dialogue on food system challenges and possible solutions](#)"

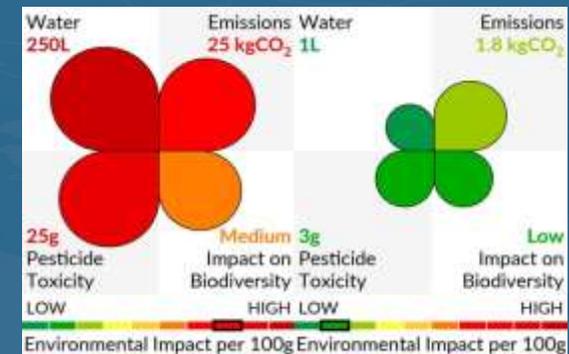
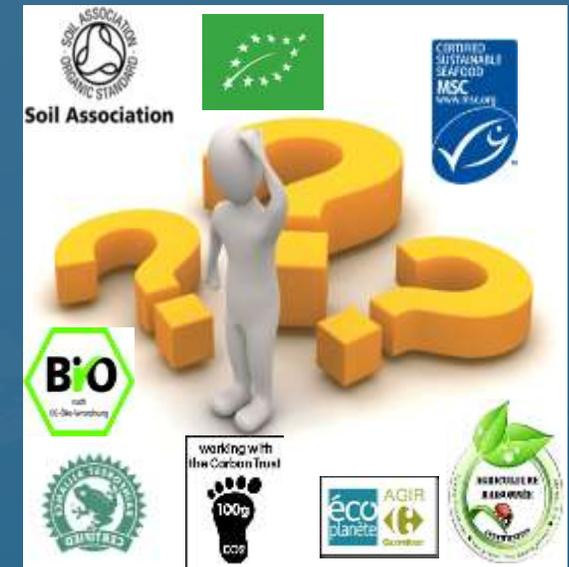
Consumers and the food system challenges (cont'd)

Acceptability of various approaches to consumers

| | Predominately supported | Inclined to oppose, but mixed responses | Very unsure about |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Reducing meat consumption | *Eat less meat Different cuts of meat | Eating insects Mechanically Separated Poultry | *Lab produced meat |
| Reducing waste | *Portion packs *Freshness sensors | | *Irradiated wheat *Long-life bread |
| Supporting sustainable choices through new products / labelling | Sustainability labelling Product redesign- chickpea flour | | |
| Farming more sustainably | *Precision agriculture Insects as animal feed | Biological controls Waste as animal feed Plant biotechnology | Meat biotechnology |
| Improving food safety | Roasting bags Rapid surface chilling | Lactic acid wash | Chlorine wash |

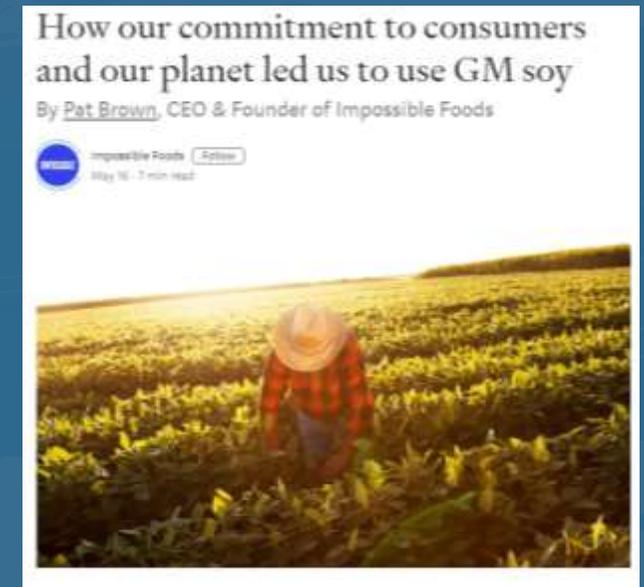
The sustainable food choice is not the easy one

- Lack of clear, independent advice on what constitutes a healthy and sustainable diet (e.g. contribution of animal products?)
- Limited availability
- Higher prices (real or perceived)
- Unclear information
 - Too many labels
 - Can issues be combined into a single composite label (“sustainability score”) vs. series of individual elements of sustainability?
- Trade-offs



Potential trade-offs: the case of meat analogues

- Cultured meat: climate friend or foe?
 - Climate-impact of cultured meat may depend on what level of sustainable and decarbonized energy can be achieved, as well as the energy-efficiency of future cell culture processes, study found.
- A veggie burger with or without GMOs?
 - Various companies have different policies towards sourcing GM ingredients (could it potentially turn some consumers off?)
- Natural/traditional vs. high-tech/'ultra-processed'



How well do plant-based meat alternatives score in consumer groups' tests?

- Test (2017) by Consumentenbond found good nutritional quality and taste of plant-based meat substitutes overall:
 - Vegetarian burgers (especially soy-based) often contained as much protein and iron as meat
 - Significantly improved taste and salt content
- Test (2018) by UFC – Que Choisir gave more contrasted results:
 - Many products had insufficient protein (incl. protein quality) and Vit B12 contents
 - Good source of fibre (while meat contains none)
 - Note of caution regarding isoflavone content



What's in a name?

15.02.2017

Veggie-Bratwurst und veganer Käse - Geschmacksinformation oder Verbrauchertäuschung?



Positionspapier der Verbraucherzentralen und des vzbv zur Kennzeichnung vegetarischer und veganer Lebensmittel

Quelle: Marzia Giacobbe - fotofila.com

- Viele vegane und vegetarische Lebensmittel tragen Namen typischer fleischhaltige beziehungsweise tierischer Produkte
- Eine Umfrage im Auftrag des vzbv von 2015 zeigt: Es besteht trotz ähnlicher Benennung kaum eine Verwechslungsgefahr zwischen tierischen und vegetarischen Produkten.
- In einem gemeinsamen Positionspapier fordern Verbraucherzentralen und der vzbv dennoch eine unmissverständliche Kennzeichnung.

salud

NOTICIA

Lo "veggie" por su nombre: sin trampantojos

27 abril 2016

Francia prohíbe utilizar nombres cárnicos para productos "veggie". Los términos "bistec", "filete" o "queso" ya no podrán usarse para referirse a alimentos veganos y vegetarianos. Apoyamos la iniciativa porque el nombre del producto debe ajustarse a su definición.

'Veggie discs' to replace veggie burgers in EU crackdown on food labels

Vegetarian food producers must revise names if MEPs agree new rules to protect meat terms



▲ Vegan and vegetarian sausages and steaks hanging on hooks. Photograph: Ritu/Shutterstock

Veggie burgers are for the chop, a Brussels committee has decreed, to be replaced by the less palatable-sounding "veggie discs".

Innovation and the future of food

- Everyone agrees on the need to change what we eat and how it is produced ... but not on the *how*.
- Innovation (under its multiple forms, not just technological) can play a key role in tackling the food system challenges but
 - It must not come with unacceptable risks
 - Consumers' attitudes and perceptions must be acknowledged to guide the development of products/solutions with greater consumer utility and acceptability to promote uptake.
- Consumers (and consumer organisations) must be part of the debate on the future of food.



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Thank you for your attention

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