



## FOCUS ON

# “‘Tofu steak’ can be misleading to consumers”

Interview with deputy Mirco Carloni (Lega), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee and first signatory of the bill on 'meaty' names for plant-based products.

Italy has a bill to combat 'meaty' names for plant-based products. Other countries, starting with France, have been moving in this direction for a few years now, and even the European Union has shown sensibility on the issue, taking action in 2019. However, in the Italian legal system there is, to date, a lack of rules regulating the naming of products that evoke meat but actually contain plant proteins. The first signatory of the bill is deputy Mirco Carloni, a member of Lega party, who assumed the chairmanship of the House Agriculture Committee in the 19th legislature.

### Mr. Carloni, your bill redefines the naming of food containing plant proteins. Why is this regulation necessary?

This regulation is necessary because products such as 'tofu steaks' or 'seitan bresaola' can be misleading to consumers. People might be led to believe that plant-based food has the same nutritional value as meat-based food, which is

rich in vitamins, proteins and minerals. And that the same techniques and care are applied. The products are different, so the names must be different.

### Article three of the bill introduces a ban on the use of names referring to meat, or meat-based products, for food containing plant proteins. Who is this bill meant to protect? And, on the other hand, who will have to comply by changing the name of specific products?

First of all, it is meant to protect our country's livestock production, as well as consumers and those working in the industry. Producers of plant-based foods – who will no longer be allowed to use names with references to meat or animal species – will have to comply.

### Some exceptions are identified in articles four and five. What are they?

The exceptions include meat-based products – when animal protein is actually in the food – which also contain plant proteins. However, the nature of the product must always be clear to the consumer.

### What is the position on food produced abroad?

If the food is produced abroad and it is sold in Italy, the same measures are applied.

### What are the penalties for those who violate the provision?

Those who do not comply with the law will face administrative penalties ranging from 500 to 7,500 euros.

Andrea Dusio



### “La ‘bresaola di seitan’ può trarre in inganno il consumatore”

L'Italia ha un disegno di legge che contrasta il cosiddetto 'meat sounding'. Se altri Paesi Ue si sono già mossi in questa direzione da qualche anno, nell'ordinamento italiano manca a oggi una normativa sul tema. Intervista all'onorevole Mirco Carloni, presidente della Commissione Agricoltura della Camera e primo firmatario del disegno di legge.

THE OPINION OF LUCA DE CARLO (FRATELLI D'ITALIA PARTY), CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND AGRIFOOD PRODUCTION

“Let's call things what they are. Stop conjuring up meat when it is not actually meat. Each person is free to choose what to eat, but everyone should do so knowing what they are actually eating. Besides, Italian meat is, in many cases, the most sustainable. The whole narrative around intensively raised meat is often made up

of baseless claims. I come from a land where the whole system of pastures, alpine grazing and mountain areas would fail, if there wasn't quality cattle, sheep and goat farming – it does not have an impact on the territory, the farming is extensive and allows for absolute quality productions that are recognised

all over the world. The radical-environmental message often gets through because it is quick and it has a high impact. But when you are able to sit around a table and delve into the subject, it is clear that there are different issues behind it and, above all, these issues do not affect us directly, because Italy masters sustainability.”

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