When can plant-based foods be described as ‘meaty’? France cracks down on plant based meat claims

In three months’ time, France will enforce a ban on the use of ‘meaty’ terminology for plant-based products.

According to the new decree, published by the government [February 27], vegan steak, meat-free bacon, and plant-based saucisse are off the menu. Operators that don’t comply could be fined up to €7,500.

The list of terms now off the table to manufacturers of plant-based meat alternatives is extensive. It includes filet, faux filet (rib eye, sirloin), rumsteck (rump steak), entrecôte (rib steak), onglet (back steak), bifteck (beefsteak), flanchet (flank), steak, escalope (cutlet), and jambon (ham).

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France is not the only country to have been toying with ‘meaty’ terminology bans for plant-based products of late. South Africa has also banned ‘meaty’ denominations from being used on vegan products, as has Italy – although the Italian government has hinted it could be ‘open’ to reconsidering.

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While some governments argue using ‘meaty’ descriptors for plant-based products can confuse consumers, alternative protein think tank the Good Food Institute (GFI) Europe does not agree. “Everyday language like ‘steak’ helps consumers know what to expect in terms of the taste and texture of plant-based foods, and as the French Supreme Court recently confirmed, consumers are not confused by these terms,” Elena Walden, GFI Europe senior policy manager told FoodNavigator.

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