

Contact: Jonathan La Morte: +32 (0)2 789 24 01
Date: 24/01/2013
Reference: PR 2013/001

Appetite to know: Europeans want food origin labelling

The origin is one of the key criteria for consumers when buying food. These are the results of a survey on origin labelling presented today in Brussels by The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC). Conducted in Sweden, France, Poland and Austria, the representative survey polled consumers about their expectations for origin labelling on food.

Confirming EU-wide Eurobarometer data¹ and BEUC member research², on average 70% of respondents say the origin to be an important factor when buying food³.

The survey findings also reveal that a clear majority of shoppers⁴ want to know the specific country their food comes from. Only about 10% of people polled indicated to prefer the indication EU or non-EU.

6 out of 10 respondents want to know both the country where a processed food's primary ingredient was farmed or harvested and the country where the food itself was manufactured⁵. Such demands would prevent practices like labelling sausages as "British" when the pork comes from Denmark.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, commented:

"In 2013, the EU will decide on crucial rules on origin labelling. Our survey clearly shows that this info ranks high when people buy food. Making origin labelling meaningful and easy to find should be legislators' yardstick."

"Producers go to great lengths to make consumers believe their food has a special regional character. German feta cheese promoted in Greek font or Chinese tomato sauce with Italian flags are poor marketing tricks to mislead shoppers. Such dishonest practices are unacceptable and should be stopped."

"Current origin labelling rules are inadequate. All meats, milk, unprocessed food and single-ingredient food should mandatorily reveal the country it comes from. Just to indicate whether food is from the EU or not is not an option for consumers."

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Note to editors:

¹ Special Eurobarometer No 389 on Europeans' attitude towards food security, food quality and the countryside found that, on average, "a substantial majority (71%) [of EU citizens] say that the origin of food is important".

² Similar research conducted by consumer organisations Test-Achats (Belgium), DTEST (Czech Republic), The Danish Consumer Council (Denmark), KEPKA (Greece), Altroconsumo (Italy), OCU (Spain) and DECO Proteste (Portugal) concluded on equivalent results.

³ 77% in Austria, 71% in France, 66% in Poland and 61% in Sweden

⁴ 59% in Austria, 50% in France, 64% in Poland and 78% in Sweden. 34% of Austrian and 36% of French consumers even want to know the *region*.

⁵ 68% in Austria, 53% in France, 57% in Poland and 61% in Sweden for meat products

68% in Austria, 53% in France, 57% in Poland and 56% in Sweden for fruit and vegetable products

⁶ Please find [here](#) a direct link to a short factsheet about the survey. [Here](#) you can access the complete report.