

## RESPONSE ADDRESSING THE POINTS MADE IN THE CONSULTATION ON USE OF THE TERMS VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN IN FOOD LABELLING

	<b>Issues affected</b>	<b>Summary of consultation comments</b>	<b>Food Standards Agency response</b>
Guidance or Legislation	Proposal was for Agency Guidance rather than legislation	99% support for voluntary Guidance. 11% of respondents wanted definitions in legislation.	The Agency considers that Guidance rather than legislation is the best way forward. The Guidance will be reviewed in the same way as other Agency Guidance to see if it is taken up and whether it is effective.
Eggs	Animal welfare. Potential for life. Religious.	Inclusion of eggs within vegetarian criteria was not universally welcomed.	To retain eggs within vegetarian criteria since majority of vegetarians content, and make no recommendation over origin or labelling in terms of production (e.g. free range) as this is an animal welfare issue.
Cross contamination	Ingredients not within criteria making way into foods labelled as suitable.	Draft guidance felt useful but not going far enough, particularly concerned about catering outlets, restaurants and supermarket counters.	To amend guidance such that manufacturers, retailers and caterers should be able to demonstrate that foods presented as vegetarian or vegan have not been contaminated with non-vegetarian or non-vegan foods during storage, preparation, cooking or display.
'From the slaughter of animals'	For vegetarian criteria this phrase does not cover all possibilities.	Felt that animals that died of natural causes, or eaten live such as oysters, or harvested (e.g. shellfish) may not fall within exclusion.	The Agency accepts that it is not acceptable to vegetarians to eat animal products whether the animal was actively slaughtered or not. Vegetarian criteria phrase altered to exclude: 'from animals that have died or have been slaughtered, and animals that die as a result of being eaten'.

Cheese	Cheese may contain rennet from animals or alternatively an enzyme not from animals.	Table attached to the guidance gave the erroneous impression that all cheeses were vegetarian.	The Agency accepts that cheese that is manufactured using rennet derived from animal sources will not be acceptable to vegetarians and will amend the guidance to reflect this.
Allergens and 2% rule	In legislation certain exemptions exist regarding labelling of ingredients.	Sections of the guidance outlining legislation felt not to make it clear what the exemptions are and had been misinterpreted by some respondents.	This section will be redrafted.
Additives, processing aids and flavourings	Detailed information is required to know whether or not these meet criteria.	Some respondents felt that more information should be in the Guidance and lists of those suitable and not suitable should be provided.	The Guidance will be amended to reference the websites (homepages) of the Vegetarian and Vegan Societies where relevant information may be found. The Agency does not have the resource to keep such lists up to date but is discussing with the Vegetarian and Vegan Societies specific areas in their web sites which could be referred to directly in our guidance rather than us giving their generic website reference. This would make it easier for industry and consumers to find their required relevant information.