

A large majority of Americans understand plant-based meat labeling

Plant-based meat is a \$1.2 billion dollar industry in U.S. retail and products are available at almost every American grocery store. A vast majority of Americans understand what these products are: plant-based products that do not contain meat from animals. And they want to see them called what they are: burgers, sausages, and nuggets that they can throw on a grill or sear in a skillet. Restrictive labeling laws don't just stifle innovation and expression, they ignore Americans' preferences and the realities of how people use these products in their daily lives. Multiple proof points from consumer research underscore that Americans understand that plant-based meat is plant-based meat.

Americans are clear on whether they're eating plant-based meat.

In a 2023 poll by Morning Consult on behalf of GFI, 94 percent of Americans were certain about whether they had eaten plant-based meat in the last year, with 43 percent saying they had eaten it and 51 percent saying they had not. Only 6 percent reported not knowing or having no opinion on if they had eaten plant-based meat in the last year. Notably, this is very similar to the percent of respondents who reported they didn't know or had no opinion about how often they had eaten conventional beef (five percent), pork (five percent), and chicken or poultry (five percent).¹

Americans are clear that plant-based meat does not contain animal meat.

A total of 75 percent of Americans said that a product labeled as "plant-based" would not contain animal meat in a 2021 study by ProVeg.²

And 76 percent of Americans understood that "plant-based beef" does not contain meat in a 2019 study by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.³

In a study from Cornell University, 88 percent of Americans thought it was unlikely that an illustrative product called "Next Generation Meat: Plant-Based

Beef Burger" came from a cow. Consumers were no more likely to believe this product came from a cow than they were for an illustrative product that did not contain meat or animal terms.⁴ The same study found that omitting words traditionally associated with animal products from the names of plant-based products caused consumers to be significantly more confused about the taste and uses of these products.

Americans expect to see plant-based meats labeled descriptively, not as generic substitutes.

In an IFIC study, when Americans were shown an image of a burger or nuggets, told they were made without animal meat, and asked what best describes them, respondents were most likely to describe them as plant-based burgers or nuggets. Describing them as plant-based burgers or nuggets was 8-9x more likely than describing them as "meat analogues" or "soy meat analogues," and 2-3x more likely than "imitation meat" or "meat substitute."⁵

Descriptions that included meat types like chicken or product formats like burgers or strips were more chosen as best describing these types of foods over generic terms like "analogue," "substitute," or "imitation."⁵

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¹ Poll by Morning Consult for GFI of 2,228 Americans, Dec. 23

² ProVeg survey of 200 Americans, Oct. 21: 'Plant-based' vs 'vegan': understanding consumer perceptions of food-labeling terms

³ National Cattlemen's Beef Association survey of 1800+ Americans, Sept. 19: Meat Substitute Brand Understanding

⁴ Are Consumers Really Confused by Plant-Based Food Labels? An Empirical Study. Survey of 155 Americans, Jareb Gleckel, Cornell University; ssrn.com/abstract=3727710

⁵ International Food Innovation Council survey of 1,001 Americans, Nov. 21: Consumption Trends, Preferred Names and Perceptions of Plant-Based Meat Alternatives