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Plant-based certification to provide long-awaited consumer confidence

Food manufacturers of plant-based meat alternatives can now ensure the highest standards are achieved after Lloyd's Register became the first certification body approved to audit against the BRCGS plant-based global standard.

The plant-based global standard was recently launched in response to growing consumer concerns over animal welfare practices and the impact of modern farming methods on the environment. Providing a framework for manufacturers to assist them in the production of plant-based food, it includes a number of requirements to ensure that plant-based products are free of material of animal origin.

Production of plant-based meat alternatives is on the rise, reflecting global trends of veganism. A 2020 study by Ipsos Retail Performance found that the number of Americans following plant-based diets is up nearly 9.4 million over the last 15 years, while the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture found that 63% of Germans are trying to reduce their meat consumption.

In the UK, supermarket Tesco has committed to increasing the sales of plant-based alternatives by 300% over the next five years, while Nestlé has announced a plant-based dairy initiative in Switzerland, to increase its focus on dairy alternatives.

However, there are concerns surrounding the quality of plant-based foods. Last year, research by Lloyd's Register found that one in five UK consumers had some doubts about the authenticity of foods marked as vegan, questioning whether these products may actually contain meat. The new standard will aim to address these concerns, with a new on-pack trademark available for those that successfully complete the programme.

Jan Kranghand, Global Head of Service Delivery at Lloyd's Register, said: "It is clear that there is growing consumer demand for meat alternatives. The BRCGS plant-based global standard will help ensure that products are manufactured authentically and labelled correctly.

"We have seen first-hand how UK consumers feel about products labelled as vegan, with some not believing it is suitable for a plant-based diet. This new standard is a necessary step to building credibility within the plant-based food industry, thanks to simple additions like the on-pack seal of approval, which will enable consumers to make informed choices quickly and easily."

Jessica Burke, Senior Manager of Technical Services at BRCGS comments: "We created the global plant-based standard as a result of growing consumer demand to ensure brands can build and maintain trust. It is founded upon proven and globally-recognised claim management protocols and reduces the risks associated with relying solely on end-product animal input testing We are looking forward to working with Lloyd's Register and supporting plant-based food manufacturers."

For more information, please visit lr.org.

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