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# EU Not Planning Special Labels For Insect-Based Food Products

by Tom Gallen

The growing number of insects authorized in the EU for sale in food, including in dietary supplements, will not be required to carry special labels, the European Commission has confirmed, despite protests from MEPs.

Companies marketing insect-based foods in the EU will not be required to carry special labels to distinguish them from other products, according to the European Commission.

“The Commission is not currently considering additional labeling requirements for foods containing insects, in view of the fact that the existing legal framework ensures that consumers are informed about the content of the food,” stated commissioner for health and food safety Stella Kyriakides in response to a question from a member of the European Parliament.

Dutch politician and MEP Robert Roos asked the Commission about labeling requirements for insects as an ingredient in food products given that four different species have now been authorized as novel foods for sale in the EU. The most recent authorization – *Alphitobius diaperinus* larvae (lesser mealworm) – is the first insect preparation approved for sale in food supplements across all member states.

Specifically, Roos wanted to know:

1. Does the Commission agree that consumers have a right to transparency regarding insects contained in their food?

## ***Insect-Based Supplements Coming To EU Following Novel Food Authorization***

By Tom Gallen

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Insect-based supplements are coming to the European Union following the authorization by the Commission of Ynsect's *Alphitobius diaperinus* larvae as a novel food.

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2. Does it agree that that producers should be obliged to use the common name of an insect on packaging, rather than its Latin name, in order to ensure greater transparency for consumers?
3. Does it intend to oblige producers to place a special ‘insect logo’ on the packaging of products containing insects?

In response, Kyriakides noted that all food sold in the EU has to comply with [Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011](#) on the provision of food information to consumers. “This Regulation provides the basis for the assurance of a high level of consumer protection in relation to food information and lays down the means to guarantee the right of consumers to information,” she stated.

The Regulation requires pre-packed food to display on the label in a conspicuous place all ingredients, and establishes that the name of the food shall be its legal name. In the absence of such a name, its customary name or a descriptive name of the food shall be provided.

“In the case of food containing insects, the name of the insect to be indicated, as specified in the relevant authorizing Commission Implementing Regulations, is the scientific name followed by the common name in brackets,” Kyriakides said. “This name must be included in the list of ingredients. In addition, a statement, in close proximity to the list of ingredients, shall indicate that this ingredient may cause allergic reactions.”

As noted by Kyriakides, when the Commission authorizes a novel food it stipulates that information which must be displayed on the product label. In the case of the [recently approved \*Alphitobius diaperinus\*](#), the labeling of the foodstuffs containing frozen, paste, dried or powder forms of the insect shall bear a statement that this ingredient may cause allergic reactions to consumers with known allergies to crustaceans, and products thereof, and to dust mites.

Furthermore, the labeling of food supplements containing *Alphitobius diaperinus* shall bear a statement that the product should not be consumed by persons under 18 years of age.