



V-Label International seal of quality

Criteria of the V-Label

Definition „vegetarian“ and „vegan“

(1) Products are considered vegan if they are not products of animal origin and in which, at no stage of production and processing, use has been made of or the product has been supplemented with:

- ingredients (including additives, carriers, aromas, fragrances, flavourings and enzymes) or
- processing aids or
- substances which are not additives but are used in the same way and with the same purpose as processing aids in either processed or unprocessed form that are of animal origin.

This comprises especially but not exclusively:

- No meat or any other slaughter products, e.g. offal
- No fish or any other marine animals
- No eggs
- No honey
- No milk
- No wax of animals such as wool fat/lanoline, beeswax or shellac
- No fur, no leather, no silk
- No royal jelly
- No colouring agents of animal origin
- No substances, which were bleached with animal charcoal
- No substances, which were clarified with animal substances such as gelatine or fish bladder
- No substances manufactured, obtained or produced from the above-mentioned substances

(2) Products are considered vegetarian if they meet the requirements of paragraph 1 with the difference that in their production milk, colostrum, eggs, honey, beeswax, propolis or wool grease including lanolin derived from the wool of living sheep or their components or derivatives may be added or used.

This comprises especially but not exclusively:

- No meat or any other slaughter products, e.g. offal
- No fish or any other marine animals
- No eggs from birds reared in cages (including „enriched cages“ and small group housing systems)
- No eggs obtained by killing animals (e.g. caviar)
- No dairy products where animal rennet was used
- No royal jelly
- No colouring agents obtained by killing animals e.g. real carmine
- No aromas, fragrances and flavourings of animal origin, except if the substance corresponds to the definition in paragraph 2
- No substances clarified with animal substances such as gelatine or fish bladder, except if the substance corresponds to the definition in paragraph 2
- No substances manufactured, obtained or produced from the above-mentioned substances



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Culture media

The aforementioned vegan and vegetarian definitions refer to all stages of production and processing and thus include the processes of biotechnological extraction of ingredients or substances. Biotechnological methods are methods in which bacteria, fungi, algae, eukaryotic unicellular organisms and/or cell cultures for the production and/or modification of the ingredients are deliberately added. For example, the last used culture media, fermenter substrates and/or carrier materials in the production of ingredients or substances which are part of the final product must also fulfil the aforementioned criteria for vegan ingredients or substances and vegetarian ingredients or substances respectively.

Guidelines for unintended traces

All stages of production, processing and distribution ought to be designed in a way that there is preferably no unintended presence of non-vegan or non-vegetarian substances. The unintended presence of non-vegan or non-vegetarian substances should be less than 0.1 % (1g/kg) in the final product. If the benchmark of 0.1 % is exceeded, the producer is obliged to improve all stages of production, processing and distribution. If optimisation is not possible, the producer has to state reasons for this. Provided that the producer has made all the arrangements to avoid contamination with non-vegan or non-vegetarian substances, a deviation from the benchmark of 0.1 % does not automatically result in an exclusion of the „vegan“ or „vegetarian“ V-Label.

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

The product must not contain any ingredients that contain genetically modified DNA (a maximum contamination of 0.9 mass percent is permitted). Genetically modified DNA is DNA that has been altered in a way that is not possible by natural crossing and/or natural recombination. End products that have to be declared as GMOs (containing genetically modified ingredients) are therefore not compliant with the V-Label.

Animal testing

Tests of any kind on animals must not be or have been carried out for the final product as well as individual ingredients, auxiliaries and other substances used for processing in relation to the product. This applies to the licensee and the producer (if not the same as the licensee) directly and on behalf of the same; for example, for the purpose of research, development and/or production, including animal testing under the guidance of government agencies at home and abroad. Exceptions are permitted only if the main benefit of the product to be tested is for the species on which the product is being tested and the tests, similar to clinical tests on humans, do not affect the health and well-being of the animal. For example, it is possible to feed vegetarian dog food over a longer period of time to domestic dogs (of dog owners voluntarily willing to participate in the study) and to regularly check the health of the dog by a veterinarian during this period.

Definition animal

The V-Label defines animals as multicellular organisms with nucleus (eukaryotes) that do not derive their metabolic energy from sunlight like plants do, need oxygen to breathe, but are not fungi. This includes all vertebrates and invertebrates.