

Milk and non-milk fats with plant and animal products: marketing standards

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(MARCK report - Doc. A3-290/92) In adopting the report by Mr Pol MARCK (EPP, B), the European Parliament broadly approved the Commission's proposal for a regulation aimed at better informing consumers of the characteristics of new milk products that had recently appeared on the market and differentiating between them, both by their composition (animal or vegetable fat or a mixture of both) and by their fat content (so-called reduced-fat products). The objective was to resolve the problem of names that confused consumers, a situation that was aggravated by the disparity of national labelling rules or even the fact that such rules did not exist for the most innovative products. With a view to ensuring better information for consumers regarding the characteristics of these products, the regulation was based on three principles: - a distinction between three major categories depending on the types of fat used: milk (butter), vegetable or other animal fats (margarine), and a mixture of the two previous categories; - the definition of seven classes of fat content ranging from 20% to 95%, defined in parallel for the three categories; - the possibility of marketing products of any fat content but with priority in the area of 80% (traditional products), 60% (three quarters) and 40% (half), alone authorised to use names such as 'butter' or 'margarine'. Butter was thus defined as a milk product whose components were exclusively derived from milk, consisting of an emulsion of the water-in-oil type. The fat content of butter was 80%. The water content of butter could not exceed 16%. The non-fat content could not exceed 2%. Parliament also retained the names 'concentrated butter' and 'concentrated margarine' for products with a fat content of between 90% and 95% (amendments by the Committee on Agriculture proposed doing away with them).