

A consumer-informed labelling format for alternative protein products



Imprint

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1. Introduction

Alternative protein (AP) products are entering European food environments at a time when consumers are increasingly asked to make food choices that consider health, sustainability, affordability, taste, convenience, and ethical concerns. Yet for many consumers, AP products remain difficult to understand. They may be unfamiliar with the ingredients, unsure about the nutritional value, sceptical about processing methods, concerned about allergens, or uncertain about how the product compares with conventional protein options. In this context, labelling becomes more than a technical requirement. It becomes a practical interface between the product and the consumer¹.

The LIKE-A-PRO findings show that clear, credible, and easy-to-understand information can support consumer confidence in AP products. Consumers want to know what a product is made from, where the main ingredients come from, how it can be used, whether it is nutritious, whether it is safe, and whether sustainability claims are meaningful². At the same time, labels can also become a source of confusion. If they are too complex, too crowded, too technical, or too reliant on unfamiliar symbols, they may fail to support decision making. If they are perceived as brand-driven or vague, they may undermine trust rather than build it³.

For unfamiliar products, consumers need more than a category label: they need to understand what the product contains, how it compares, and how it fits into everyday diets.

The challenge is particularly important for AP products because many consumers approach them with questions they may not ask about more familiar foods. For conventional products, consumers often rely on habit, familiarity, and established expectations. For AP products, they may need additional reassurance. This includes reassurance about the protein source, nutritional adequacy, degree of processing, ingredient origin, allergens, taste expectations, and preparation. A label that simply states that a product is “plant-based” or “vegan” may not provide enough information for consumers who are curious but hesitant.

This governance mechanism proposes a labelling format that is informed by consumer preferences and behaviour. Its purpose is not to create another complex certification scheme or add another competing logo to an already crowded label landscape. Instead, it proposes a layered format that helps consumers quickly understand the most important information at the point of choice, while making

1 Grunert, K. G., & Wills, J. M. (2007). A review of European research on consumer response to nutrition information on food labels. *Journal of Public Health*, 15, 385–399. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-007-0101-9>

2 Xhelili, A., Wiegard, J., & Schüürmann, J. (2025). LIKE-A-PRO's Living Labs. Consumer Insights Dataset. LIKE-A-PRO project. Wuppertal, 2025.

3 Penzavecchia, C., et al. (2022). The influence of front-of-pack nutritional labels on eating and purchasing behaviours: a systematic review. *Public Health Nutrition*.

A useful AP label should answer three questions

What is it?

Main protein source and product type



How does it compare?

Nutrition, ingredients, suitability, and value-relevant information



Can I trust it?

Clear claims, origin, processing information, and verification



**Clarity at first glance.
Transparency in depth.**

more detailed information available when needed. The aim is to improve transparency and comparability without increasing cognitive burden.

The distinctive contribution of this mechanism is to treat labelling as a bridge between trust and usability. Consumers do not only need more information; they need information that is organised in a way that supports real-life decisions. A useful AP label should therefore answer three practical questions quickly: What is this product? How does it compare? Can I trust it? If the label can help consumers answer these questions without confusion or exaggeration, it can support the wider uptake of AP products while strengthening transparency across the market.

2. What is in this governance mechanism?

This governance mechanism provides a proposed labelling format for alternative protein products, together with recommendations for how such a format could be developed, tested, governed, and applied in practice. It is intended for policymakers, standard-setting bodies, food industry actors, retailers, certification organisations, consumer organisations, researchers, and other stakeholders involved in food information and consumer protection.

The document focuses on how labelling can improve transparency and comparability for AP products. It addresses what information should be visible at first glance, what information should be available in more detail, and how labels can support consumers with different levels of familiarity, motivation, and dietary needs. It also considers how labelling can avoid common problems such as information overload, vague claims, unclear terminology, greenwashing, or the overuse of identity-based labels.

The mechanism proposes a two-layer labelling approach. The first layer is a simple front-of-pack or point-of-choice format that communicates a small number of essential elements. The second layer provides extended information through the back of pack, menu details, digital tools, or QR-supported product information. This layered approach recognises that consumers often make decisions quickly, but that some consumers also want more detailed information before trusting or repeatedly purchasing an AP product.

The mechanism does not assume that one single label can solve all barriers to AP uptake. Taste, price, availability, product quality, and cultural fit remain essential. However, a well-designed labelling format can reduce uncertainty, improve comparability, support trust, and help consumers understand how AP products fit into their diets. It can also support responsible marketing, procurement, and product development by making expectations clearer for producers and retailers.

3. How was this governance mechanism developed?

The proposed labelling format was developed by bringing together evidence from the LIKE-A-PRO Living Labs⁴, behavioural intervention pilots⁵, and stakeholder briefs⁶. The Living Labs provided insight into what consumers want to know about AP products and how they use labels in everyday decision making. Across countries, consumers highlighted the importance of clarity, credibility, simplicity, ingredient origin, nutritional information, allergen information, cooking guidance, and environmental claims. At the same time, they expressed concerns about confusing terminology, unfamiliar ingredients, over-processing, unclear production methods, and labels that require too much effort to interpret.

The Living Lab findings also show that labels do not affect all consumers in the same way. Some consumers actively use labels to assess health, sustainability, or ethical production. Others rely more on packaging familiarity, product placement, brand trust, or previous experience. Older consumers may prefer clear visual cues and minimal text, while younger consumers may be more willing to interpret slightly more complex value-based information. Consumers already familiar with APs may want more transparency about production methods and sourcing, while sceptical consumers may need clear, verifiable claims before they are willing to try the product. These differences point to the need for a layered labelling format: simple enough for quick decisions, but detailed enough for those seeking reassurance.

The behavioural pilots reinforce this need for clarity. The retail choice-expansion pilot showed that visibility, placement, discounts, and tastings can encourage trial, but also that trust is not guaranteed by visibility alone. Consumers and retailers both highlighted the importance of clear labelling and easy interpretation, particularly when AP products are placed near conventional protein products. Retailers also noted that ingredient lists, processing concerns, and perceived value influence repeat purchase, meaning that labelling must support not only first trial but sustained confidence.

The stakeholder briefs further underline the role of labels in building trust and transparency. The industry-oriented brief identifies labelling as essential for com-

4 Xhelili, A., Wiegard, J., & Schüürmann, J. (2025). LIKE-A-PRO's Living Labs. Consumer Insights Dataset. LIKE-A-PRO project. Wuppertal, 2025.

5 Xhelili, A., Schüürmann, J., Strube, R., Ziavras, S., Perrea, T., Chrysochou, P., Nystrand, B., Bye, I., Nystad, R., Vázquez-Araújo, L., Romeo-Arroyo, E., Vertriest, L., Willems, M., van der Waard, S. (2026). Driving Change with LIKE-A-PRO: Results and Lessons from Behavioural Intervention Pilots. LIKE-A-PRO project. Wuppertal, 2026.

6 Xhelili et al. (2024) Acceptance of Alternative Proteins Among European Consumers. Policymaker, Industry, CSOs and Academia Briefs.

municating ingredients, production methods, nutritional content, traceability, and product integrity. The policy-maker brief recommends promoting labelling schemes that help consumers make more informed and sustainable decisions, while also stressing that behavioural insights are needed to improve their effectiveness.

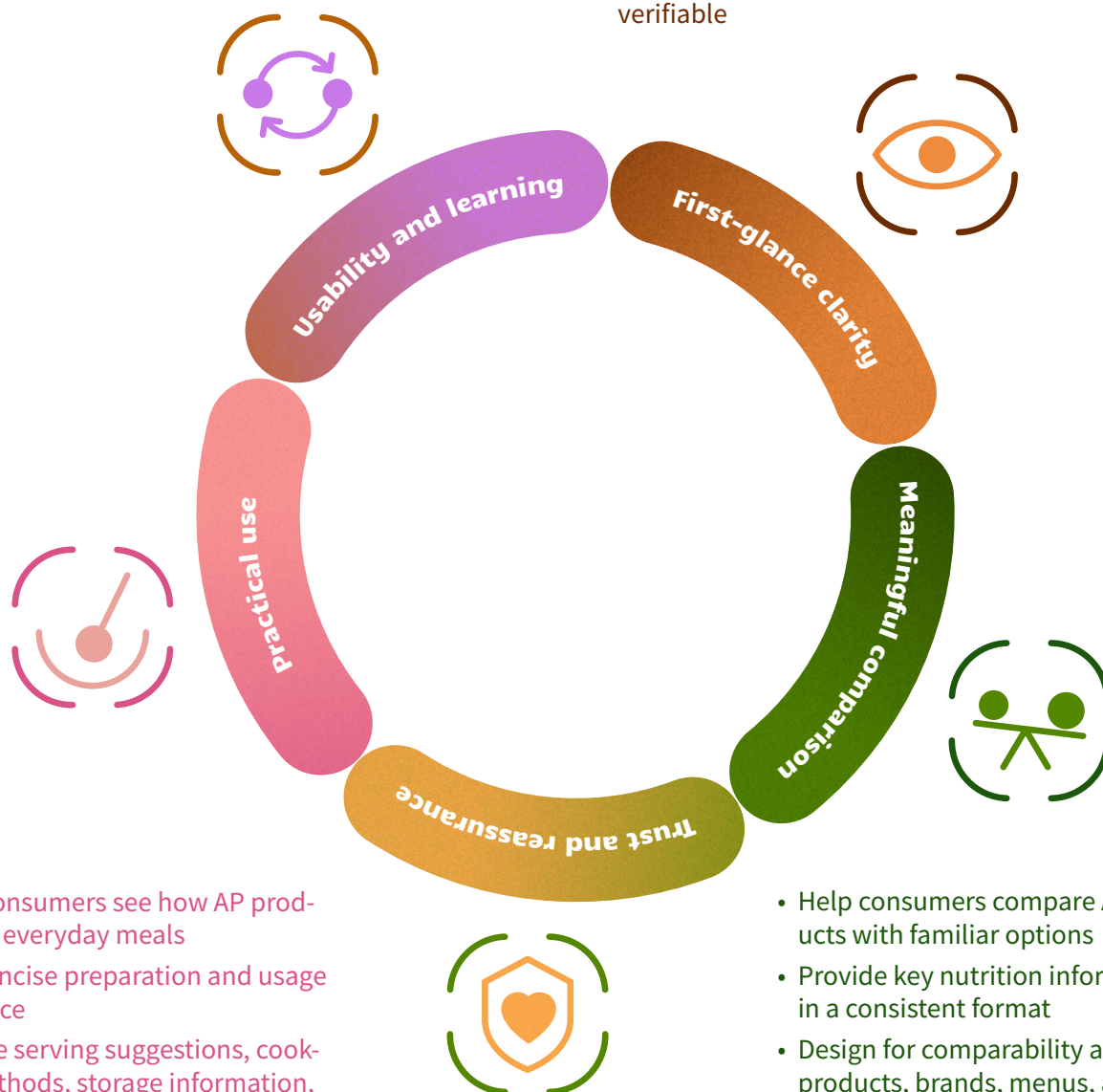
Taken together, these findings suggest that AP labelling should avoid two extremes. It should not rely on vague or overly simple claims that fail to answer consumer concerns. But it should also not overwhelm consumers with dense technical information. The proposed format therefore aims to provide clear essential information at a glance, supported by more detailed information where needed.

4. Proposed labelling format and design recommendations



From label clarity to consumer trust product identity

- Check whether the label works in real decision contexts
- Avoid label overload and unnecessary complexity
- Test comprehension with different consumer groups before scaling
- Check whether the label improves clarity, trust, comparison, and willingness to try
- Address concerns that can block trial or repeat purchase
- Explain processing and ingredient concerns transparently
- Make allergen and dietary suitability information clear without making it the whole product identity
- Make sustainability claims specific, credible, and verifiable



- Help consumers see how AP products fit everyday meals
- Add concise preparation and usage guidance
- Provide serving suggestions, cooking methods, storage information, or familiar use cues
- Keep essential preparation information available without requiring a QR code
- Help consumers quickly understand what the product is
- Use a layered label: simple first, detailed second
- Make the main protein source immediately visible
- Avoid relying only on broad terms such as “plant-based,” “vegan,” or “meat-free”
- Help consumers compare AP products with familiar options
- Provide key nutrition information in a consistent format
- Design for comparability across products, brands, menus, and digital settings
- Avoid implying that all AP products are automatically healthier or more sustainable

4.1

Use a layered label structure: simple first, detailed second



The proposed format is based on a layered information logic. The first layer should provide essential information at the point of choice. This could appear on the front of pack, on shelf labels, on menus, or in digital product listings. Its role is to help consumers quickly understand what the product is, what it is made from, and why it may be relevant to them.

The second layer should provide more detailed information for consumers who want to go further. This could appear on the back of pack, through menu information, retailer websites, producer websites, or QR-linked product pages. Its role is to provide transparency without overloading the first point of contact.

This layered approach reflects real consumer behaviour. Many food decisions are made quickly, especially in supermarkets, canteens, restaurants, and online shopping environments. A label that requires too much reading will often be ignored. At the same time, consumers who are unfamiliar with AP products may need more reassurance before buying or buying again. A two-layer format allows both needs to be met.

The practical aim is to make the first layer clear enough to support quick comparison, while making the second layer credible enough to support trust.

The layered label Two layers of information

Layer 1 — Point of choice

- Main protein source
- Key nutrition information
- Dietary suitability and allergens
- Simple verified sustainability or ingredient cue
- Basic preparation guidance

Layer 2 — Further information

- Full ingredients and additive functions
- Production method
- Sourcing and origin
- Certifications and evidence behind claims
- Detailed preparation and recipe guidance

4.2

Make the protein source immediately visible



The first information element should be the main protein source. Many AP products are currently described through broad terms such as “plant-based,” “meat-free,” or “vegan.” These terms may be useful, but they do not tell consumers what the product is actually made from. For consumers with allergies, taste expectations, nutritional concerns, or processing concerns, the specific source matters.

The proposed label should therefore clearly state the main protein source, using plain language. Examples include “made with peas,” “made with lentils,” “soy-based,” “mushroom-based,” “fermented protein,” or “insect protein,” depending on the product. Where a

product combines multiple protein sources, the main sources should be listed in order of relevance.

This information should be visible at first glance. It should not require consumers to read the full ingredient list before understanding the product. Making the protein source clear can reduce uncertainty, support comparison, and avoid the impression that AP products are hiding behind broad marketing language.

This is especially important for consumers who are sceptical of highly processed AP products. Clear protein-source information does not remove all concerns, but it helps establish a more transparent starting point.

4.3 Provide meaningful nutrition information for comparison



Consumers often want to know whether AP products are nutritionally adequate. Some are concerned that APs may not provide enough protein, may lack key micronutrients, may contain too much salt, or may be less satiating than conventional protein products. Others are interested in fibre, saturated fat, or health-related benefits. A labelling format that supports uptake should therefore make nutrition information easy to compare.

The label should include a small number of nutrition indicators that are relevant to protein choice. These could include grams of protein per serving, fibre, saturated fat, salt, and selected micronutrients where relevant, such as iron or vitamin B12. The format should avoid implying that all AP products are automatically healthy. Instead, it should support informed comparison across products.

Where legally and scientifically appropriate, the label could allow comparison with a relevant product category. For example, a plant-based burger could provide nutrition information in a way that allows consumers to compare it with other burger products. This should be done carefully to avoid misleading claims. The purpose is not to present AP products as superior by default, but to help consumers understand the nutritional profile of the product they are considering.

Nutrition information should be presented in plain language and with a consistent format. If each producer uses a different system, consumers will struggle to compare products. A shared format would make AP products easier to evaluate and could support fairer market competition.

4.4 Address processing and ingredient concerns transparently



Processing is one of the most sensitive issues for AP products. Some consumers are interested in APs because of sustainability or ethical concerns, but hesitate when products have long ingredient lists, unfamiliar additives,

Unfamiliar ingredients do not automatically undermine trust. Unexplained ingredients and processes do.

or highly technical descriptions. LIKE-A-PRO Living Lab insights also suggest that concerns about ultra-processed foods can reduce repeat purchase and weaken the mainstream appeal of processed AP substitutes.

A useful labelling format should not hide processing complexity, but neither should it rely on simplistic categories that may mislead consumers. Instead, it should provide practical transparency. Consumers should be able to understand the main ingredients, the role of key additives where present, and the basic production method.

For example, a back-of-pack or digital layer could explain whether the product is made through extrusion, fermentation, blending, cultivation, or another process, using plain language. Additives should be disclosed clearly, and where possible, their function should be explained. This can help avoid the impression that unfamiliar ingredients are automatically unsafe or deceptive.

At the front-of-pack level, the format could include a simple “ingredient clarity” element rather than a broad “clean” claim. Terms like “clean label” can be attractive, but they are not always consistently defined. A more transparent approach would specify what is being communicated, such as “main protein source clearly identified,” “no artificial colours,” “short ingredient list,” or “additives explained,” depending on the criteria adopted.

4.5 Include allergen and dietary suitability information without making it the whole identity



Allergen information is essential for AP products. Many APs are based on ingredients such as soy, gluten, nuts, legumes, or other sources that may be relevant for consumers with allergies, intolerances, or dietary restrictions. Consumers also need clarity on whether products are vegan, vegetarian, halal, kosher, gluten-free, or suitable for other dietary requirements where applicable.

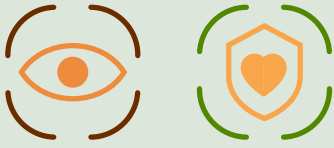
However, dietary suitability labels should not become the only or dominant way AP products are presented. The LIKE-A-PRO findings suggest that labelling AP products mainly as vegan or vegetarian can unintentionally narrow their appeal. Consumers who do not identify with those categories may overlook the product even if they would be open to trying it.

The labelling format should therefore separate product identity from dietary suitability. The main label should first clarify what the product is and what it is made from. Dietary suitability should then be clearly available through recognised icons, allergen statements, or menu symbols. This approach supports those who need dietary information while avoiding unnecessary niche positioning.

The same principle applies in restaurants and canteens. AP dishes should be clearly labelled for dietary suitability, but their main description should still focus on the dish itself: ingredients, flavour, preparation, and meal appeal.

4.6

Make sustainability claims specific, credible, and verifiable



Sustainability is one of the reasons AP products are promoted, but sustainability claims can also generate scepticism if they are vague, exaggerated, or unsupported. Consumers may ask whether the product is genuinely more sustainable, where ingredients come from, how they are produced, and whether processing or transport reduces the environmental benefit.

A consumer-informed label should therefore avoid broad, unsupported claims such as “planet-friendly” or “eco” unless they are backed by clear criteria⁷.

Sustainability information should be specific and verifiable. This may include information on the origin of the main protein ingredient, recognised certifications, production standards, or environmental indicators where robust data are available.

The first label layer should not attempt to communicate every sustainability dimension. A simple cue may be enough to indicate that sustainability information is available or verified. The second layer can provide more detail, including sourcing, certification, methodology, or links to life-cycle evidence where appropriate.

Credibility is central. The label should indicate whether claims are independently verified, based on recognised schemes, or provided by the producer. Consumers are more likely to trust claims when the source of verification is clear. This is particularly important in a market where sustainability language is widely used and sometimes perceived as marketing rather than evidence.

How labelling can support AP uptake



⁷ European Commission. (2023). Proposal for a Directive on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims (Green Claims Directive). COM(2023)

4.7**Add practical preparation and usage guidance**

A label supports uptake when it not only explains the product, but also helps consumers imagine preparing and eating it.

Many consumers are unsure how to cook with AP products or how to integrate them into meals. This is a capability barrier, not simply a marketing issue. A label that provides basic preparation guidance can reduce uncertainty and make trial more likely.

Preparation guidance should be concise and practical. It can include cooking time, cooking method, serving suggestions, meal pairing ideas, or storage instructions. For unfamiliar ingredients, the label can suggest familiar uses, such as “use like mince,” “add to pasta,” “serve in wraps,” or “pan-fry for five minutes.” This helps consumers understand how the product fits into existing routines.

Digital tools can provide additional recipes, but essential preparation guidance should remain available without requiring a QR code. Not all consumers use QR codes, and some make decisions quickly at the shelf or menu. A layered approach works best: basic use information on pack or menu, with optional extended recipes online.

This element is particularly relevant for products that are not direct substitutes for familiar meat or dairy products. Legume-based, mushroom-based, fermented, or novel AP products may require more guidance to support confident use.

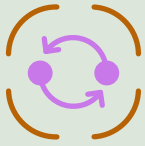
4.8**Design for comparability across products and settings**

One of the main purposes of the proposed labelling format is to improve comparability. Consumers often compare products quickly based on price, nutrition, ingredients, taste expectations, and trust. If AP labels vary too much across brands, retailers, and food environments, comparison becomes difficult.

A shared format should therefore use consistent categories across AP products. These categories could include protein source, nutrition profile, allergen and dietary suitability, sustainability information, processing and ingredient clarity, and preparation guidance. The exact details may vary by product type, but the structure should remain recognisable.

Comparability should also extend across food environments. In supermarkets, the label may appear on packaging and shelf tags. In restaurants and canteens, similar information can appear on menus or digital menu systems. In online shopping or delivery platforms, the same categories can appear in product descriptions and filters. This consistency helps consumers learn how to interpret AP information over time.

A labelling format that only works on packaged retail products would be too narrow. AP choices are also made in restaurants, canteens, schools, public institutions, and digital spaces. The proposed format should therefore be flexible enough to work across these settings.



A major risk is label overload. Consumers already encounter many labels, icons, claims, and certification schemes. Adding another complex AP label could increase confusion rather than reduce it. For this reason, the proposed format should be tested before wider implementation.

Testing should assess whether consumers understand the label, whether they trust it, whether it helps them compare products, and whether it changes perceived clarity or willingness to try. Tests should include different consumer groups, including people familiar with APs, sceptical consumers, older consumers, younger consumers, people with dietary restrictions, and consumers with lower food literacy.

Testing should also examine whether the label works under real conditions. A label that performs well in a survey may not work in a busy supermarket, a canteen queue, or a digital shopping interface. Eye-tracking, shelf simulations, menu experiments, in-store pilots, and qualitative interviews can all support better design.

The goal should not be to maximise the amount of information shown. It should be to identify the minimum information needed to support clarity, trust, and comparison, while ensuring that additional information is available for those who want it.

5. Suggested implementation pathway

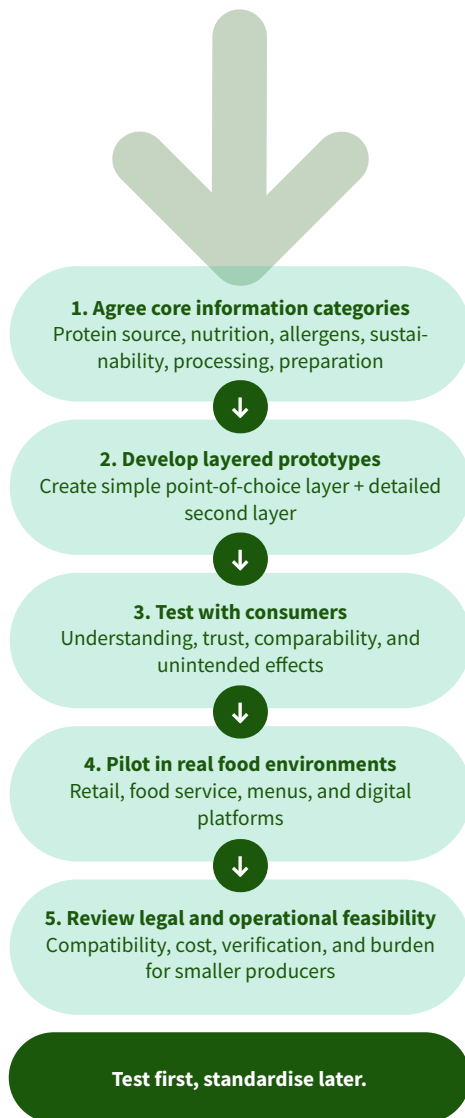
A realistic pathway should treat AP labelling as a design, testing, and governance process rather than as an immediate new mandatory scheme. Because AP products vary widely in ingredients, processing methods, production models, and consumer familiarity, the first objective should be to develop a voluntary prototype that can be tested with consumers and refined before wider uptake.

A label should be tested where decisions actually happen—not only in surveys, but at shelves, on menus, and in digital shopping environments.

The process should begin by agreeing on the label's information architecture. Policymakers, consumer organisations, industry actors, retailers, researchers, and certification bodies should identify the small set of information categories that matter most for AP choices: protein source, key nutrition information, allergen and dietary suitability, sustainability and origin, processing and ingredient clarity, and preparation guidance. Keeping this architecture limited is important because the label should support decision making rather than add another layer of complexity.

Once the core information categories are agreed, visual prototypes can be developed. These should include a simple point-of-choice layer and a more detailed second layer. The point-of-choice layer should help consumers recognise what the product is and compare it quickly. The second layer should provide deeper infor-

A stepwise implementation pathway



mation on ingredients, production methods, sourcing, preparation, certifications, and evidence behind claims. Several design options should be compared before one format is selected.

The next task is consumer validation. Prototype labels should be tested with different consumer groups and in realistic decision contexts, including supermarkets, canteens, restaurants, and digital shopping environments. Testing should assess whether consumers understand the label, trust it, use it for comparison, and feel more confident about trying or repurchasing the product. This stage should also identify possible unintended effects, such as confusion, perceived greenwashing, or the impression that AP products are overly technical.

After consumer validation, the format should be checked against existing labelling rules and certification schemes. The proposed label should complement, not duplicate or contradict, existing requirements on nutrition declarations, ingredients, allergens, organic certification, and recognised dietary labels. This legal and technical review is important for credibility and for avoiding unnecessary burdens on producers⁸.

The next phase should focus on implementation feasibility. Producers, retailers, and food service providers should pilot the format on packaged products, shelf labels, menu labels, digital product listings, and canteen or restaurant settings. Unlike the earlier consumer validation stage, this phase should examine whether the label can be applied consistently in real business and food-service operations. It should assess data availability, packaging constraints, product database systems, costs, retailer usefulness, and feasibility for smaller producers.

If the evidence is positive, the prototype can be translated into wider voluntary guidance. Standard-setting bodies and consumer protection actors could define recommended information categories, design principles, verification expectations, and rules for claim substantiation. Over time, if the format proves useful, trusted, and feasible, it could inform sector standards or future discussions on harmonised AP labelling.

Within this pathway, credibility should be safeguarded by standard-setting and consumer protection actors. Industry actors and retailers are essential because they control packaging, product databases, shelves, menus, and digital product information. Researchers should support testing and evaluation. Consumer organisations and civil society actors should help ensure that the format remains understandable, trustworthy, and not primarily driven by commercial claims.

⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers. Official Journal of the European Union, L 304, 22 November 2011.

6. Distilled summary and practice-oriented indicators

This governance mechanism proposes a consumer-informed labelling format for AP products that supports transparency and comparability without adding unnecessary complexity. Its central idea is that AP labels should help consumers quickly understand what the product is, how it compares, and whether they can trust it.

The proposed format is based on a layered approach. The first layer provides simple, point-of-choice information on protein source, key nutrition aspects, dietary suitability, and credible sustainability or ingredient clarity cues. The second layer provides more detailed information on ingredients, allergens, production methods, origin, preparation, certification, and evidence behind claims.

In practical terms, the proposed format should follow a simple design logic: first, identify the product clearly by making the main protein source visible; second, support comparison through a consistent set of nutrition and ingredient categories; third, address processing, allergen, and dietary suitability concerns in plain language; fourth, ensure that sustainability claims are specific, credible, and verifiable; and fifth, test the format with consumers in realistic shopping, menu, and digital contexts before wider use.

Practice-oriented indicators for implementing and evaluating the proposed AP labelling format

LABELLING OBJECTIVE	PRACTICAL INDICATOR	WHY IT MATTERS
Improve product understanding	Share of consumers who can correctly identify the main protein source after seeing the label	Tests whether the label answers the basic question: what is this product?
Clarify product identity	Share of consumers who can distinguish product type, protein source, and dietary suitability after seeing the label	Ensures the label explains what the product is without relying only on vegan or plant-based terminology
Support comparison	Time needed for consumers to compare two AP products on protein, salt, fibre, or price-relevant information	Measures whether the format reduces decision effort
Ensure claim governance	Presence of agreed rules for verification, evidence, and responsibility for sustainability, health, and processing-related claims	Protects the label from becoming a marketing tool without accountability
Build trust	Consumer trust rating in the label and in the claims displayed	Indicates whether the label increases credibility
Avoid overload	Share of consumers reporting that the label is easy to understand at a glance	Ensures the label does not become too complex
Address processing concerns	Share of products providing plain-language information on production method or ingredient function	Responds to concerns about unfamiliar or highly processed foods
Improve allergen clarity	Share of products with clearly visible allergen and dietary suitability information	Supports safety and inclusion
Strengthen sustainability credibility	Share of sustainability claims linked to recognised criteria, evidence, or third-party verification	Helps reduce greenwashing concerns
Support practical use	Share of products with basic preparation or serving guidance visible on pack or at point of choice	Helps consumers integrate APs into meals
Improve cross product consistency	Number or share of participating brands using the same information categories	Supports comparability across the market
Test real world usability	Number of pilots conducted in supermarkets, canteens, restaurants, or digital environments	Ensures the format works beyond survey settings
Monitor behavioural relevance	Change in willingness to try, purchase intention, or repeat purchase after label exposure	Assesses whether labelling supports uptake
Protect smaller producers	Producer feedback on cost, feasibility, and administrative burden	Ensures the format is implementable in practice



7. Conclusion and way forward

Labelling can play an important role in helping consumers navigate alternative protein products, but only if it is designed around real decision-making needs. Consumers do not simply need more information; they need information that is clear, credible, comparable, and easy to use. For AP products, this is especially important because unfamiliar ingredients, processing concerns, nutritional questions, allergen risks, and sustainability claims can all influence trust.

The way forward is to develop a labelling format that is simple at first glance and transparent in depth. A front-facing or point-of-choice layer should help consumers quickly understand the main protein source, key nutrition information, dietary suitability, and credible sustainability or ingredient clarity cues. A second layer should provide more detailed information for those who want to understand production methods, sourcing, preparation, and evidence behind claims.

This mechanism's specific contribution is to position labelling as a trust and comparability tool, not merely as a branding or compliance exercise. If designed well, labelling can help AP products become easier to understand and compare with familiar options. It can also support responsible marketing, better procurement, and more informed consumer choice.

A realistic way forward is to begin with a voluntary, consumer-tested prototype. This prototype should be developed with input from policymakers, industry, retailers, researchers, and consumer organisations. It should be tested in real food environments and refined before wider adoption. Over time, if the format proves useful and feasible, it could inform voluntary guidance, sector standards, or future policy discussions on harmonised AP labelling. In this way, labelling can support the mainstreaming of alternative proteins by reducing uncertainty, strengthening trust, and helping consumers make more confident choices.

