Court of Auditors report on food labelling

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European Court of Auditors Report: Food labelling in the EU: Consumers can get lost in the maze of labels

Findings of the review

The European Court of Auditors, the body that reviews EU spending, has published a report on food labelling.

The report highlights significant gaps in the EU's food labelling and control frameworks. Under current EU regulations, the European Commission has only taken action on four out of 11 key labelling topics, leaving several issues – including botanical claims, nutrient profiles, and nutrient and allergen labelling – either incomplete or unaddressed.

The report also points out that misleading information, including "clean" labels (e.g. advertising "antibiotic-free") and unsubstantiated environmental claims, is widespread, contributing to consumers' confusion. Despite EU rules requiring clear labelling, monitoring systems are inadequate with inconsistent enforcement across Member States, particularly in online retail and for voluntary labels like nutrition and health claims.

The Court of Auditors recommends that the Commission should urgently address these gaps, enhance consumer understanding, and improve the effectiveness of controls, especially for online sales and voluntary labels. It also calls for a more systematic approach to monitoring consumers' understanding of food labels.

Timeline

The Court of Auditors asks the Commission to implement the recommendations in the report by 2027.

For more information see the full record on the AGRINFO website – where you can also view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

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