

Future Foods

An international legal roadmap

Our global food system is changing to make way for more sustainable alternatives to meat and dairy products, which includes plant-based meat alternatives, cultivated meat, and fermentation.

This exciting and innovative industry is rapidly progressing and legislation and regulation is increasing in response. Our international legal roadmap provides an overview of existing and upcoming regulations in key European jurisdictions, and outlines key takeaways for your business.





Key regulation

Existing:

- Food Information Regulations 2014 and Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 on food information to consumers
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Food Additives Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008
- Regulation No 1334/2008 on flavourings
- Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 on novel foods
- The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023
- The Food and Feed (Regulated Products) (Amendment, Revocation, Consequential and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2025

On the horizon:

- Under the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023, secondary legislation in the form of the draft Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Regulations 2025, have been introduced. These regulations establish the regulatory framework for the use of precision-bred plants in food and feed. They outline the requirements for obtaining a food and feed marketing authorisation, which is necessary for placing these precision-bred plants on the market. The aim is to simplify the authorisation process for bringing new products to market, and will allow precision-bred products (only applying to plants initially) to be rolled out across the country. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has also published draft guidance on this new authorisation process.
- The Food and Feed (Regulated Products) (Amendment, Revocation, Consequential and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2025 came into force on 1 April 2025 and amend, revoke and replace various provisions in secondary assimilated law with regard to regulated food and feed products. Most notably the regulations remove the periodic renewal requirements for feed additives, genetically modified organisms and smoke flavourings, aligning the regimes with those for regulated food and feed products that do not require renewal. The regulations also streamline the authorisation process for regulated food and feed products by removing the requirement for a statutory instrument to be made following approval. The hope is that this will reduce the time it takes for innovative products to be authorised and placed on the market.

- The UK government has also launched the Regulatory Innovation Office (RIO) to streamline regulatory processes and support the swift market entry of innovative products and services. One of the four initial areas of focus for the RIO is on engineering biology, which can create new products such as cultivated meats. As part of this, in March 2025, the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology awarded the FSA £1.4 million to support a new innovation hub to develop expertise in new innovative technologies.
- The FSA has launched a regulatory sandbox that will provide pre-application support to cell-cultivated products companies, addressing key questions such as labelling before market entry. By allowing businesses to test new developments under regulatory supervision and facilitating product approval through the RIO, the sandbox aims to reduce the time and cost associated with regulatory approval.
- Significant investment from the UK government and private sector is directed towards alternative protein research, exemplified by the launch of the £38 million National Alternative Protein Innovation Centre (NAPIC), dedicated to advancing research in this field.



United Kingdom

- Last year in the UK, lab-grown meat used for pet food received regulatory approval and this approval acts as a significant milestone for cultivated meats. This development will be welcomed and closely monitored by businesses seeking to bring similarly innovative techniques and products to market. The FSA welcomed this innovation within the animal feed sector and it will be interesting to see whether this has a positive impact on the FSA's approach to alternative proteins being approved for human consumption.

Key takeaway

These developments suggest that there will be a positive shift in alleviating the application process of future foods, including precision-bred organisms and novel foods, making it easier for these products to reach the market.

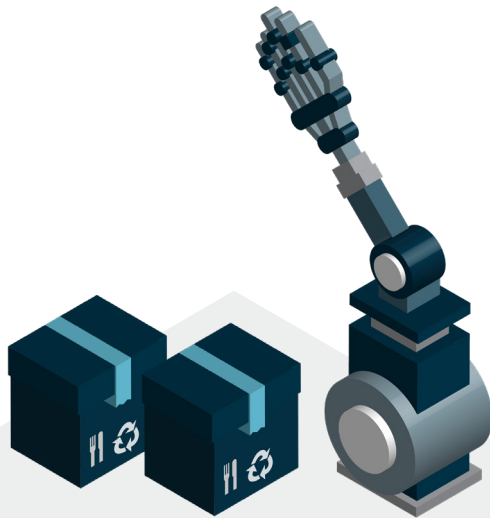
Additionally, with the increase in funding in this area, the progression of regulatory reform and introduction of the RIO, as well as the UK government's pro-growth agenda, we anticipate there to be further progress made in the coming years in regards to regulatory reform which businesses should keep abreast of and engage with where relevant.

Ultimately, with the regulatory framework destined to become more flexible in the near future, this may also give investors more confidence to invest in this market.



Read more

- [New regulations signal next step for precision bred plants in England](#)
- [Draft Genetic Technology \(Precision Breeding\) Regulations 2025 | Draft guidance published on precision breeding | Food and Feed \(Regulated Products\) \(Amendment, Revocation, Consequential and Transitional Provision\) Regulations 2025](#)
- [Could 2025 be the year that further progress is made on authorising innovative foods? | Regulated products reform update | Regulations under the Precision Breeding Act](#)
- [UK government launches the Regulatory Innovation Office](#)
- [The UK is developing its approach to deregulating gene editing in plants](#)

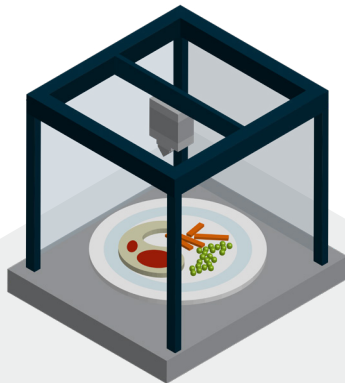




Key regulation

Existing:

- Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 on general food safety
- Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 on food additives
- Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008 on flavorings
- Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 on novel foods
- Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on food information to consumers
- Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 on genetically modified food and feed
- Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition & health claims



On the horizon:

In February 2024, the European Parliament adopted its negotiating position on the European Commission's proposal for a less stringent approach to the regulation of plants produced by new genomic techniques (NGTs) and products, food and feed containing or consisting of NGT plants. The Council of the EU has not yet adopted its negotiating position and we await further details on their position.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has updated the guidelines for applications for novel foods in the EU. This includes both scientific and administrative guidance that will apply to all new novel food applications from February 2025. These updates aim to keep the safety assessment processes current with the evolving novel food industry, incorporating further detail where gaps were identified since the regime entered into force in 2018.

Key takeaway

Whilst there are no legislative plans to reform the novel food framework in the EU, the update to the guidelines is the first update since the novel food regime came into force in 2018 illustrating a shift in trying to make the process smoother for applicants. Businesses looking to submit an EU novel food application will welcome this further detail on the process and should ensure applications contain all the relevant information from February 2025.

With the increase in noise around alternative proteins, especially as other countries are going further than the EU to put innovative food products on the market, it may be that the EU does soon decide to take steps to update its regulatory framework to enable more products to be approved.

Additionally, in regards to the new regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed products, businesses should keep track of the progress of this.

Read more

- [What are the patentability implications of deregulating gene editing in plants in the EU?](#)
- [Marketing and authorisations for novel foods in Europe – where are we now?](#)



Key regulation

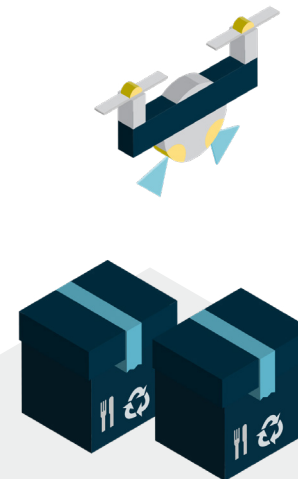
Existing:

All existing EU legislation and national implementing laws, in particular:

- the Law of 24 January 1977 on the protection of consumer health regarding food products and other products
- the Law of 21 December 1998 on product standards aimed at promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns and protecting the environment
- Book VI of the Code of Economic Law (on consumer law and Commercial practices)
- Implementing legislation of EU Regulation n°1333/2008 on food additives and aromas (several royal decrees)
- Royal Decree of 11 October 1997 on novel foods and novel food ingredients
- Royal Decree of 21 February 2005 on GMOs
- Royal Decree on Foods containing Nutrients (30 May 2021), Plants and plant-based preparations (31 August 2021), or others (29 August 2021)

On the horizon:

- Updating the local legislation on novel foods (as implementing act of the EU Novel Food Regulation) and food hygiene.
- The powers of the food safety regulators have been increased (higher fines, more investigation and initiative prerogative).
- Revision of labelling rules including on “green” products and packaging.
- Legislation on the protection of farmers (commercial practices and remuneration).
- Legislation to combat overconsumption of food.



Key takeaway

There is a high pressure on price in traditional products sold to consumers and very low margins for producers and distributors. Some brands try to develop new types of foods products (e.g. without meat) in order to expand their market and get a better market position. While novel foods or alternative proteins are not a household name yet, there is a growing interest in developing products in this sector and investing in research and development.

Also, the focus of the food industry is increasingly put on durability (including in agrofood techniques) and local products rather than innovation as such.



Key regulation

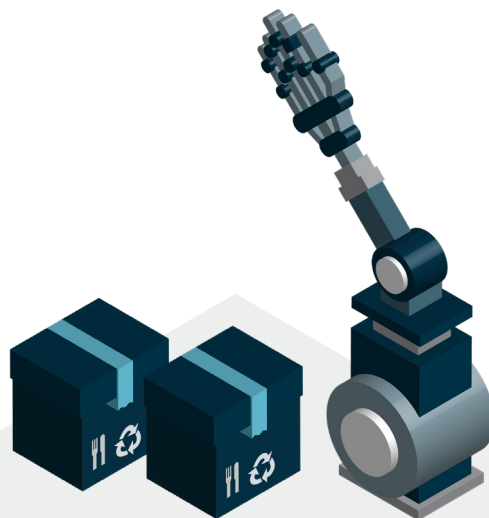
Existing:

All existing EU legislation and national implementing laws, in particular:

- Law 17/2011 on food safety and nutrition
- Law 12/2013 on measures to improve the functioning of the food supply chain
- Royal Decree 1334/1999 on food labeling and advertising
- Royal Decree 1487/2009 on food supplements
- Royal Decree 126/2015 on food information on foods presented unpackaged for sale to the final consumer and to mass caterers, foods packaged at the point of sale at the request of the purchaser, and foods packaged by retail trade operators

On the horizon:

The authorisation procedure for alternative food is based at the European level and is mostly regulated by the Novel Food Regulation (EC) No. 258/97. Whilst no new national legislation in relation to promoting the development and introduction of alternative protein sources or other novel foods is currently anticipated, the National Food Strategy, which outlines Spain's approach to transforming its food system emphasizes the importance of innovation and the development of new food products and ingredients. This includes promoting alternative protein sources and encouraging the development of plant-based alternatives.



Key takeaway

The introduction of the National Food Strategy will provide a roadmap for the future of the food sector in Spain. Spanish businesses should use this information to align their operations and long-term strategic planning with national objectives of food security and innovation and make informed investment decisions on this basis.

The Spanish trend towards plant-based diets presents a significant market opportunity for businesses to capture market share and drive growth. Moreover, the potential economic impact and job creation from the alternative protein and cultivated meat sector offers a powerful incentive for businesses to invest in innovation in this sector.

Beyond economic benefits, the environmental challenges posed by desertification and climate change make the development of alternative proteins not only a business opportunity but a necessity.

In this context, a robust regulatory and legal framework is essential to support the growth of Spain's alternative protein sector.





Key regulation

Existing:

- The French Consumer Code

All existing EU legislation and national implementing measures, in particular:

- Law 2020-105 of 10 February 2020 on the fight against waste and the circular economy
- Law no. 2021-1104 of 22 August 2021 on combating climate change and building resilience to its effects
- Law no. 2018-938 of 30 October 2018 for balanced trade relations in the agricultural and food sector and healthy, sustainable food accessible to all
- Law no. 2021-1357 of 18 October 2021 to protect farmers' remuneration
- Law no. 2023-221 of 30 March 2023 to strengthen the balance in commercial relations in the agricultural and food sector. commerciales entre fournisseurs et distributeurs
- Decree no. 2014-1489 of December 11, 2014 (JO, Dec. 12), which amended articles R. 412-2 et seq. of the French Consumer Code). This defines the general principles, requirements and general responsibilities governing food information, in particular, food labeling

On the horizon:

The marketing of most foods is subject to specific regulations. The labelling and presentation of foodstuffs are subject to specific rules, which are often modified to take account of changes in production techniques and sales conditions.

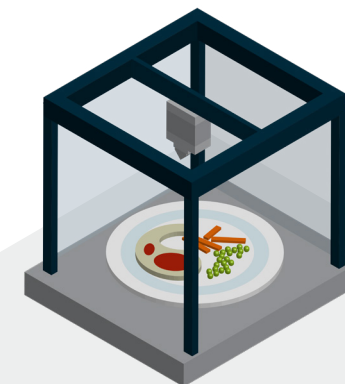
The French government has announced several new measures in response to growing farmer discontent across France and Europe. Some of these measures are aimed at protecting public health and biodiversity. The minister promoted new GMOs as tools for ecological transition and this is reflected in the bill for agricultural sovereignty, which eases regulations on new GMOs.

Additionally, the government stated that the principle of food sovereignty will be enshrined in law as part of the bill. Sovereignty plans will be created for sectors facing strong international competition, particularly livestock farming. At a European level, France will also support a ban on the use of the denomination "meat" for plant-based products that imitate meat to protect the livestock sector from international competition. In this regard, France's Consumer Code stipulates that the names used to designate foodstuffs of animal origin may not be used to describe, market, or promote foodstuffs containing plant proteins. A decree specifies the terms of this ban. However, the decree was annulled by a decision of 28 January 2025 by the Conseil d'Etat, which ruled that it had no legal basis insofar as the law was adopted in disregard of the harmonisation required by EU law, which has so far prevented the legislator from adopting provisions governing the names in question.

Key takeaway

Current debates on agricultural sovereignty in France suggest a desire to simplify the regulatory framework for food production. This trend could facilitate market access for locally produced products. However, as the French regulatory environment is heavily influenced by European regulations, particularly in terms of food safety and the use of certain substances, the banning of certain substances at European level may make the regulatory environment less favorable.

Additionally, in regards to the new regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed products, businesses should keep track of the progress of this.



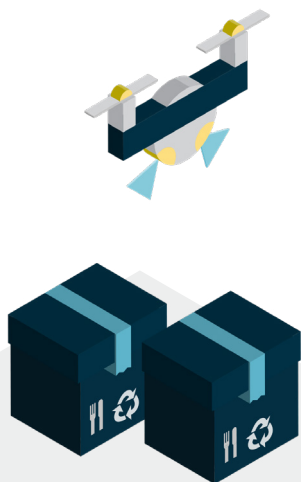


Key regulation

Existing:

All existing EU legislation and national implementing measures, in particular:

- Food and Nutrition Safety Act (OJ 2023 1148) and secondary provisions
- Act on Commercial Quality of Agri-Foodstuffs (OJ 2023 1980)
- Micro-Organisms and GMO Act (OJ 2022 546)



On the horizon:

According to **Green Alliance's report**, in the high innovation scenario, Poland would be among the ten European countries with a food self-sufficiency thanks to alternative proteins. However, this would require significant supportive policy.

Poland was ranked in the top 10 most productive European countries with regard to alternative protein research in **GFI Europe's analysis**. At the same time, Poland's research and innovation funding **falls behind other European countries**.

Whilst there is no new legislation expected, some funding programmes are available. E.g. the NUTRITECH programme organised by the National Centre for Research and Development enables entrepreneurs and researchers to obtain grants for their activities. The second edition, NUTRITECH II – nutrition in the light of the challenges of improving societal well-being and climate change, will be announced in 2025.

Key takeaway

Given Poland's ambitions to strengthen its drug/API independence, by analogy the authorities may be sympathetic to initiatives aimed at the country's nutritional self-sufficiency, in particular by increasing the share of alternative proteins in the food market, including the location of research centres and production facilities. With a strong research community and economic potential Poland may attract innovative businesses focused on alternative proteins. Thoughtful initiatives are needed on the legislative front.





Key regulation

Existing:

- Law No. 172 of 1 December 2023 'Provisions on the prohibition of the production and placing on the market of food and feed consisting of, isolated from or produced from cell or tissue cultures derived from vertebrate animals as well as the prohibition of the name meat for processed products containing plant proteins'.

On the horizon:

- On 1 December 2023, Law No. 172 was published in the Italian Official Gazette, in violation of the so-called TRIS procedure (so the law should be disapplied by the national court). The Law has been justified on the basis of the precautionary principle of Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002, which allows the Member States to prohibit food and feed business operators inter alia from using in the preparation of food, drink and feed, selling, placing on the market, producing for export food or feed consisting of, isolated from, or produced from cell or tissue cultures derived from vertebrate animals.
- Moreover, the law prohibits so-called "meat sounding" names. A decree of the Minister of Agriculture to be adopted within sixty days from the date of entry into force of the law, should have introduced a list of prohibited food names of vegetables products that could mislead the consumer as to the composition of the food. To date, however, the decree has not been issued so that the regulation remains unimplemented.

In the autumn of 2024, the European Court of Justice (deciding an appeal brought by a French company) stated that a Country may not prohibit the use of names classically associated with meat to indicate plant-based products. Therefore, the Italian government is currently considering regulatory changes to make the rules compatible with EU law.

- Italy has transposed Regulations (EU) No 2021/882; 2022/169; 2021/1975 and 2023/58 regulating the sale of so-called insect flour in a more stringent manner, by establishing among other things, that:
 - the name of the product must clearly indicate the source of the components, the quantities used (up to a maximum of 10%) and the country of origin (according to the specifications set out in Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011). This indication must be clear and complete;
 - the name may not contain a reference to 'flour', but to 'powder';
 - the label must state that the product may cause allergic reactions in consumers with known allergies to crustaceans and crustacean products, molluscs and mollusc products and dust mites;
 - the product must be sold on separate shelves marked with appropriate signage.

Key takeaway

A need to protect many Italian products has meant that future food legislation in Italy has progressed more slowly than in other European countries. However several Italian companies, and their trade associations, have said they expect the market to expand. It's therefore fair to assume that the Italian government will give more support to investment possibilities in this market, this includes through ad hoc legislative measures. It is therefore fair to assume that the Italian government will give greater support to investment possibilities in this market, also through ad hoc legislative measures.

Read more

- [Novel food regulations permit the arrival of insect flour in Italy](#)



Contacts

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United Kingdom



Leanne Coates
Partner

T +44 117 917 4478
leanne.coates@osborneclarke.com



Anna Lundy
Associate Director

T +44 20 7105 7075
anna.lundy@osborneclarke.com



Laurence Nelson
Senior Associate

T + 44 20 7105 7151
laurence.nelson@osborneclarke.com



Siân Edmonds
Associate Director

T +44 20 7105 7622
sian.edmonds@osborneclarke.com

Belgium



Vladimir Murovec
Partner

T +32 472 607 628
vladimir.murovec@osborneclarke.com



Marie Canivet
Partner

T +32 2 515 9376
marie.canivet@osborneclarke.com



Louis Hoffreumon
Counsel

T +32 2 515 9328
louis.hoffreumon@osborneclarke.com

Spain



Roger Segarra
Partner

T +34 93 419 18 18
roger.segarra@osborneclarke.com

France



Joanna Peltzman
Partner

T +33 1 84 82 45 35
joanna.peltzman@osborneclarke.com

Poland



Agnieszka Sztoldman
Counsel

T +48 503 973 626
agnieszka.sztoldman@osborneclarke.com

Italy



Maria Grazia Medici
Partner

T +39 06 3269 5015
mariagrazia.medici@osborneclarke.com



Giulia Verusio
Senior Associate

T +39 06 3269 5008
giulia.verusio@osborneclarke.com

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