

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001835/26
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PFE)
(6 May 2026)**

Subject: Applications that assign values to food products using algorithms

The widespread growth across the EU of applications that assign summary values to food products using algorithms that have not been approved by any European or national health authority, based on standardised parameters relating to 100 grams of the product and without taking into consideration any actual portions and the overall nutritional context, is having potentially harmful and distortive effects on the agri-food industry, and is especially detrimental to high-quality 'Made in Italy' products.

These simplistic and reductive methods give results that are highly prejudicial to designation of origin products, which can mislead and create alarm among consumers. This poses a real risk of economic and reputational damage being caused to entire EU production chains.

The absence of scientific checks and approval raises serious questions over consumer protection, transparency of information and the proper functioning of the internal market.

Given the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Will it take action to ascertain whether the algorithms used are scientifically reliable and transparent?
2. Does it consider it acceptable for tools that have not been approved to be allowed to influence consumer choices?
3. Is it planning to take steps to tackle these potentially deceptive and anti-competitive practices?

Submitted: 6.5.2026

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(16 September 2026)**

EU sectoral legislation on food ⁽¹⁾ does not apply to digital apps that assign values to food products using algorithms ⁽²⁾. However, traders providing such apps to consumers must respect EU consumer law.

Specifically, Directive 2005/29/EC ⁽³⁾ prohibits misleading practices that affect consumer decisions about products. The enforcement of national rules transposing that directive lies with national authorities, which can cooperate within the framework of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network established by Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 ⁽⁴⁾.

The Commission does not approve individual digital services, such as food apps, nor does it assess the reliability or transparency of their algorithms.

Notwithstanding the above, the Commission is fully committed to safeguarding traditional and high-quality food products, particularly those protected as/by geographical indications (GI) ⁽⁵⁾.

Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 ⁽⁶⁾ provides for protection of GIs against use, misuse, imitation or evocation, and against any other false or misleading indications and any other practice liable to mislead consumers as to the true origin of a product. The enforcement of these rules is the responsibility of Member States.

⁽¹⁾ 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, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004 (OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2011/1169/2025-04-01>).

⁽²⁾ This regulation applies only to 'food businesses,' defined as 'any undertaking, whether for profit or not and whether public or private, carrying out any of the activities related to any stage of production, processing and distribution of food.' Digital applications that assign summary values to food products using algorithms are usually not owned or managed by food business operators.

⁽³⁾ Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2005/29/oj>).

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 (OJ L 345, 27.12.2017, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/2394/oj>).

⁽⁵⁾ As set out in Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 (OJ L, 2024/1143, 23.4.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1143/oj>).

⁽⁶⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1143/oj/eng>.

The Commission promotes networks and experience sharing among the competent national authorities in view of raising awareness on misleading practices and making the fight against them more effective.

While no specific assessment on food rating apps has been conducted so far, the Commission continuously monitors digital tools that could affect the food supply chain, including their potential impact on competition.

Should concrete evidence of anticompetitive practices emerge, the Commission will consider further action under EU competition rules.
