



Geographic Indications and the U.S. Meat Industry

The North American Meat Institute (NAMI or Meat Institute) works closely with the Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN) to continually monitor new trademark and Geographic Indications (GI) applications in target export markets. To defend the use of common names and establish broader precedents for GIs and common name treatment, the Meat Institute has worked with CCFN to file comments and objections to GI applications that threaten the continued use of certain common meat terms in several key foreign markets. These filings have included opposing GIs for black forest ham and bologna in Australia; bologna in China; and Black Forest Ham, bologna, chorizo, mortadella, salami, and prosciutto in Mexico.

NAMI is particularly concerned about sweeping protections, often pursued by the European Union in free trade agreement negotiations, for multi-term GIs (Prosciutto di Parma, Mortadella Bologna) that would preclude the use of generic component terms (prosciutto, mortadella, bologna) when those terms are used independent of their compound GIs. To be clear, the Meat Institute does not oppose a GI protection for Prosciutto di Parma, but the common term “prosciutto,” in this example, must retain its generic status and must remain available for all to use.

Attempts to restrict common meat terms that have been in the public domain for decades, if not longer, are anti-competitive and protectionist. Such restrictions would cause undue harm to American producers by imposing onerous labeling, rebranding, and associated production costs. These producers could, in turn, lose access to crucial export markets, thereby causing some to shutter completely. Others would be forced to undertake cost-prohibitive consumer education campaigns to address confusion resulting from burdensome rebranding initiatives that would be required to comply with erroneous GI regulations. Consequently, consumer choice would be curtailed in markets where high-quality, competitive U.S. meat products bearing generic names are shut out.

NAMI supports GI policies that are transparent and that establish enforceable due process procedures that promote impartial reviews of GI applications, including opportunities to oppose unjustified GIs before final determinations are made.

List of Common Meat Terms of Concern:

The Meat Institute maintains the following meat terms are generic, and should be recognized as such in future trade agreements and GI policies.

1. Black Forest Ham
2. Bologna
3. Chorizo

4. Kielbasa
5. Mortadella
6. Prosciutto
7. Salami

About NAMI

The North American Meat Institute is the leading voice for the meat and poultry industry. The Meat Institute's members process the vast majority of U.S. beef, pork, lamb, and poultry, as well as manufacture the equipment and ingredients needed to produce the safest and highest quality meat and poultry products.

About CCFN

The Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN) is an independent, international nonprofit alliance whose goal is to work with leaders in agriculture, trade, and intellectual property rights to foster the adoption of high standards and model geographical indication guidelines throughout the world. CCFN's supporters include the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Milk Producers Federation, North American Meat Institute, U.S. Dairy Export Council, and the Wine Institute.

