

## **THE WAR OF LABELS**

By Lucina Paternesi and Giulia Sabella

Images by Giovanni De Faveri, Davide Fonda, Carlos Dias, Fabio Martinelli, Marco Ronca

Image Research Paola Gottardi

Editing Sonia Zarfati

Publishing and graphics Giorgio Vallati

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

On labels we find calories, fat, sugar, fibre, and protein referring to 100 grams or even to the single serving. They also report the percentage of the indicated daily intake. But are they comprehensible?

### **SERGE HERCBERG - DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF NUTRITION SORBONNE PARIS NORTH UNIVERSITY - NUTRI-SCORE CREATOR**

Consumers always have little time while shopping to understand the nutritional quality of foods or to make comparisons between products of different brands.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

This is why, in 2020 the World Health Organization recommended adopting a concise, simple and intuitive logo to facilitate consumer choices toward nutritionally healthier foods.

### **ANTONIO PRATESI - DIETICIAN PHYSICIAN - ILFATTOALIMENTARE.IT**

Meanwhile, we are talking about Public Health, that is, policies for health, meaning prevention of chronic, noncommunicable diseases.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

Front-of-pack labelling is precisely one of the pillars of public health policies, the others being taxation of unhealthy foods, control of advertisements aimed at children, and control over misleading claims made on packages. Labels of this kind have already been adopted in the United Kingdom, Australia, and even Central and South America, and the outlook for some products is changing.

### **ANTONIO PRATESI - DIETICIAN PHYSICIAN - ILFATTOALIMENTARE.IT**

See how some Italian products are classified in Mexico. All three with black stamps: high in sugar, high in fat, high in calories.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

After the verdict of the black stamps, tigers, puppets and bees disappeared from the packages of some cereals -that is, everything that is most appealing to children disappeared. But new label claims have lead industrialists to be on the warpath.

### **ANTONIO PRATESI - DIETICIAN PHYSICIAN - ILFATTOALIMENTARE.IT**

The food industry business is colossal, more than guns and drugs.

### **SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN STUDIO**

This explains the struggle between two labels, Nutri-score, the traffic light label, and Nutrifarm, the battery one. The struggle behind it is not only between Italy or France, but also between industrial lobbies and the scientific committee. Nutri-score, the traffic light label, was conceived in France by Professor Hercberg's team, and it basically consists of five colours and letters; the presence of the letter A

or B and the dark green or green colours mean that we are dealing with product that has some fibre, protein, and little fat content. On the other hand, when we go to letters C, D or E, and the colours begin to change from yellow to orange to dark orange, it means that that product contains high amounts of sugars, fats and salts, that is, it is potentially dangerous to health. It is precisely because of this clarity and directness that it's the label of choice for the WHO, which prefers labels that help consumers choose the best behaviours for disease prevention. It is also preferred by Europe, as 59% of the population are overweight, 23% obese. Italy is also the fourth largest country in Europe for overweight children, and even the second largest for childhood obesity. And that is why Nutriscore, the traffic light label, is also valued by the European Public Health Association and IARC, the International Agency for Research on Cancer. However, it does not make a judgment about the quality of the product. That's why in Italy producers but also politicians don't like it. Lucina Paternesi and Giulia Sabella from Report.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

The Nutri-score is a label model developed in France. Each food is evaluated by an algorithm according to the elements that are beneficial to humans, such as fruits, vegetables, protein and fibre, and those that, if consumed in excess, can contribute to the onset of certain diseases: sugars, salt and saturated fatty acids, carrying more weight in the final judgment. The result is summarized by a letter: from A, the most beneficial, to E, and also by a colour ranging from dark green to deep orange.

### **SERGE HERCBERG - DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF NUTRITION SORBONNE PARIS NORTH UNIVERSITY - NUTRI-SCORE CREATOR**

The algorithm is based on studies developed by an Oxford team. The reference values for the final score were defined based on thresholds set by the French National Food Safety Agency, then validated by scientific studies.

### **ANTON IO PRATESI - DIETICIAN PHYSICIAN - ILFATTOALIMENTARE.IT**

It is a very clear, simple label, you don't even have to explain it, one sees it and understands it. You see how you can discriminate between different types of beverages: the one that has A is only water, generally all sugary drinks have an E.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

Green foods include pasta, legumes, and bread, while meats, cheeses, and snacks often have orange stamps. Yellow for mozzarella, a few cookies and some fruit juices. The Nutri-score does not make judgments about the quality of a product, nor does it demonize it. It is a simple tool that helps consumers understand at a glance what they are buying, make comparisons between products of the same type, and choose the one impacting their health the least. In Belgium, they have already adopted it for a couple of years.

### **LAURENCE DOUGHAN - BELGIUM NUTRI-SCORE GOVERNANCE STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

When we buy a pizza, we do not know how to immediately choose the one that impacts our health the least. Yet, the difference is there. This one has the letter A because it's a pizza base with tomato only. A pizza with vegetables and mushrooms is B, a four-cheese pizza is E due to the presence of saturated fat.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

Despite the scientific basis, woe betide putting a red stamp on foods. The harsh reaction of producers is provoked. They know this well at Carrefour, the chain of

French supermarkets that in 2021, in Italy, ended up in the crosshairs of the Competition and Market Authority after a complaint by Confagricoltura.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Why did you make this report to the Antitrust Authority against Carrefour?

**MASSIMILIANO GIANSAANTI - CONFAGRICOLTURA PRESIDENT**

It wasn't against Carrefour, yet against those who use the Nutri-score system. We believe that, on the one hand, in Italy the Nutri-score system does not provide good information to consumers; on the other hand it obviously causes inequalities, or competitive advantages, for companies using it.

**FLAVIA MARÉ - CARREFOUR ITALY QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER**

The products featured here are few, about 100. In this case they are chocolate cereals with a B label. Here, instead, we can see cookies, they're also covered in chocolate, which also provides sugar and fat, and in this case the label is an E.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

These are products made in France and then distributed in Italy, they are not products made here.

**FLAVIA MARÉ - CARREFOUR ITALY QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER**

Yes, because the moment companies join the system, they're also required to put the Nutri-score label on the entire assortment to prevent companies from choosing to favour the most balanced products.

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

To avoid the fine, Carrefour pledged not to apply the Nutri-score label on PDO and PGI products, and to inform consumers through billboards posted in all stores.

**SERGE HERCBERG - DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF NUTRITION SORBONNE PARIS NORTH UNIVERSITY - NUTRI-SCORE CREATOR**

Even in France, the manufacturers' lobby rejected the Nutri-score to defend its interests, and was often supported by politicians. But in the face of scientific evidence in 2017, the traffic light label was introduced in France, albeit voluntarily. In fact, even today some multinational companies such as Ferrero, Lactalis, Coca-Cola, continue to reject it.

**GIU LIA SABELLA**

Doesn't Nutella have a Nutri-score?

**LAURENCE DOUGHAN - BELGIUM NUTRI-SCORE GOVERNANCE STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

It doesn't! But if you want to have an idea there's an equivalent product, it is rated D, you see? This other one, however, is E, although it's organic it is fatter.

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

The Nutri-score would not only help consumers make choices but may even prompt companies to make health improvements in product recipes. Yet, it does not convince any of our politicians.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Good evening Minister, could I ask you just one question? What do you think about the Nutri-score?

**ANTONIO TAJANI - MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

About what?

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

The Nutri-score.

**ANTONIO TAJANI - MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

I'm against the Nutri-score.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Why?

**ANTONIO TAJANI - MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Because it is used...

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

But if it's been adopted in most of Europe, there are more than 30 years of study.

**ANTONIO TAJANI - MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Thirty years of studies not going in the right direction.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

What are your thoughts on the Nutri-score?

**ADOLFO URSO - MINISTER OF ENTERPRISES AND MADE IN ITALY**

What the Italian government thinks.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Which is?

**ADOLFO URSO - MINISTER OF ENTERPRISES AND MADE IN ITALY**

We have frozen it so far.

**FRANCESCO LOLLOBRIGIDA - MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND FORESTRY**

I think it's a very bad tool, because it doesn't inform, it influences.

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

The battle against the Nutri-score *is* cross cutting, earning acclaim just about everywhere for the sake of Made in Italy, and the first to agree *is* Coldiretti.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Misleading, discriminatory, and incomplete. Why does Coldiretti resent this label so much?

**FELICE ADINOLFI - CENTRO STU DI DIVU LGA SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR-COLDI RETTI**

The first reason is that surely the algorithm does not take into account some elements that are fundamental to a product's nutritional profile. The second element is that the algorithm can be modified by acting on the positive elements without the absolute value of the negative elements coming into play.

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

That is, manufacturers could modify some recipes by reducing salt or sugar in order to be upgraded to better colours and letters, without affecting nutritional values. A diet drink today is light green despite having no nutrients, while a fruit juice might have an orange stamp if it is too sugary.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

What are the reasons why you think this is a wrong label?

**EMANUELE MARCONI - CREA DIRECTOR - RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

The Nutri-score wants to produce the best with a single food; instead, this must be achieved with the combination of several foods.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

You're talking about nutrition education, it's a different policy, it's a different thing from the front-of-pack label.

**EMANUELE MARCONI - CREA DIRECTOR - RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

It's necessary to inform. That's the principle, otherwise we end up eating like dogs, who are given kibble, perfect, green letter A.

**SERGE HERCBERG - DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF NUTRITION SORBONNE PARIS NORTH UNIVERSITY - UTRI-SCORE CREATOR**

The Nutri-score is not made to educate, it is made to enable consumers to put into practice the information they have received from other institutions and guide their food choices. There is no contradiction, rather a complementarity.

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

The algorithm behind the Nutri-score traffic light does not make judgments about the quality of a product. It rates it based on the presence of fibre, fat or sugar; therefore, it doesn't like to those place the quality of a product above everything else.

**EMANUELE MARCONI I - CREA DIRECTOR - RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

An extra virgin olive oil is compared to a rapeseed oil, it is compared to a high-oleic sunflower oil, and these are all refined oils.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

This is precisely why the Nutri-score is constantly evolving -it could even revealing ultra-processed foods by colouring the traffic light background black. That's the beauty of the algorithm: the very fact that, based on studies, you can constantly update it.

### **EMANUELE MARCONI - CREA DIRECTOR - RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

These are the 12 people who have changed the algorithm in the last two years, does it seem right to you that, depending on who goes there, they change the algorithm? Then I'll go there and make my own algorithm, then I agree.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

This is not quite the case. The algorithm is periodically updated by the group of scientists from the countries that have joined the semaphore label.

### **GIULIA SABELLA**

How often is the algorithm updated?

### **LAURENCE DOUGHAN - BELGIUM NUTRI-SCORE GOVERNANCE STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

For example, when new revelation studies are published in the field of nutrition, we must necessarily take them into account. Basically, the algorithm *is* almost perfect, but we realized that, for example, olive oil was not being valued by the algorithm. We know its health benefits when consumed in moderation. So we said: all right, let's try to take these aspects into account. This is why olive oil *went* from D to C and will now become B.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

In addition to the countries that have joined the system, the committee hosts representatives from observer countries, such as Finland and Austria.

### **LAURENCE DOUGHAN - BELGIUM NUTRI-SCORE GOVERNANCE STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

We are also supported by a scientific committee, one or two scientists per member country, free of conflicts of interest because, very importantly, *it is* not the country that has to be represented, yet science.

### **SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN STUDIO**

Our scientists could also be part of the scientific committee if Italy adopted the Nutri-score. The European Commission was supposed to propose a single label and make it mandatory in all member countries by the end of 2022, but pressure from lobbies, including Italy's, lead to a delay. They are working on it. Now the Nutri-score is disliked because it does not express a judgment on the product quality. So, in Italy we have made our own label, it's called the Nutrinform Battery, but how does it work?

### **LUCINA PATERNESI**

Between this label and this label, which one *is* clearer?

### **LADY AT THE SUPERMARKET**

Well, definitely this one.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

To see what consumers think, we asked some supermarket customers to compare three boxes of cereals based on the values on the Nutrinform Battery label.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Can you tell me which of these three is the healthiest according to this label?

**LADY AT THE SUPERMARKET**

It should be this.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

It's the healthiest according to you. No, look, let me show you.

**LADY AT THE SUPERMARKET**

Oh no, I get it, I didn't see this one.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

The healthiest is this one. What is the clearest label to tell at a glance what you think is the healthiest food?

**LADY AT THE SUPERMARKET**

The one with the traffic light.

**BOY AT THE SUPERMARKET**

Between the two indications? Well, definitely this one.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

The one with the traffic light?

**BOY AT THE SUPERMARKET**

This one, however, is more specific.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

You'd buy this.

**LADY AT THE SUPERMARKET**

No, pardon, this.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

What if I show you the Nutri-score label ...

**LADY AT THE SUPERMARKET**

Oh my gosh.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

At a glance, tell me the healthiest product among these three.

**LADY AT THE SUPERMARKET**

Undoubtedly, I must trust the green A.

**GIRL AT THE SUPERMARKET**

I mean, A is seen as the highest grade, therefore the best. Colours play their part too, it's really the traffic light, isn't it?

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

Out of nine, only two identified the healthiest product by looking only at the battery label. For everyone else, it helped to show the traffic light label, which was judged to be more immediate and comprehensible at first glance.

### **SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN STU DIO**

Welcome back. The WHO has long called for a clear and impactful label, in order to help consumers navigate and choose the right foods to protect their health. For some time now, some countries have adopted the Nutri-score label, which is the traffic light label devised in France that has letters and five different shades of colour, from green, which stands for healthier foods, to dark orange, where it means you are dealing with foods high in fat, sugar and salt. They're very useful for prevention and especially for those who have conditions such as diabetes, obesity or cardiovascular problems. It was devised in France by a university, adopted by the Ministry of Health based on a hundred independent studies, and what determines the colours and letters is an algorithm designed at Oxford that calculates the impact of each individual nutrient on the product; in short, it does not judge the quality, therefore, should a yellow stamp appear on Parmesan cheese or Nutella, it does not mean that it's a dangerous product, but one should limit its consumption because it is high in fat or sugar. But from the industry lobbies, the Nutri-score is seen as a vote, a judgment, and that is why here in Italy we created the Nutrinform Battery, our label. Basically it displays the information written on the back of the product turning it into a battery; here a first problem already comes up, because one chooses the battery that is more charged or thinks it's better, or the product with the most charged batteries, while the ones that have lower battery levels are better because you take in less calories. Then the colours are all uniform, all light blue, then there are 17 different numbers, some in percentages, in short, it's a bit complicated to get your bearings; however, it's a label that everyone here in Italy, producers, trade associations and politicians, have agreed on. And then they judge it as a label, more informative, giving no judgments, giving no grade, but I mean, on what scientific basis was it approved?

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

While the French model today has already been adopted also by Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland, Italy has proposed an alternative. It's called Nutrinform-Battery and is a revival of a label that was already in vogue in Europe 20 years ago.

### **ANTONIO PRATESI - DIETICIAN PHYSICIAN - ILFATTOALIMENTARE.IT**

Italy took it from the industry, basically, it said "we adopt it, we like it and then we include a graphic element", which is the battery one.

### **LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

Except that the battery here works in reverse: the more discharged, the better the nutritional quality of the food. The Nutrinform was proposed by four ministries, Higher Institute of Health and CREA, the Agricultural Policy Research Centre. While in France the Nutri-score was developed by independent scientists from public universities, in Italy the Nutrinform Battery is sponsored by Federalimentare, the Confindustria association that groups all companies operating in the food sector.

### **LUIGI DI MAIO MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS 2019-2022 NUTRIFORM BATTERY LAUNCH - 15/02/ 2022**



Italy is against the adoption of mechanisms based on so-called food traffic lights, such as the Nutri-score system, as they are inspired by simplistic logic and lack clear scientific foundations.

**GIULIA SABELLA**

How many scientific studies have validated the Nutri-score?

**SERGE HERCBERG - DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF NUTRITION SORBONNE PARIS NORTH UNIVERSITY - UTRI-SCORE CREATOR**

To date there are more than one hundred studies in the world, financed entirely by public funds, that have validated the Nutri-score in every respect. Then there are retrospective studies that have shown, across populations followed for ten to fifteen years, a lower incidence of cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, and cancer based on healthier eating, that is, eating foods that the Nutri-score rates with the letters A and B and light or dark green.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

What scientific studies are there behind Nutrinform?

**ANTONIO PRATESI - DIETICIAN PHYSICIAN - ILFATTOALIMENTARE.IT**

There are only three studies, which have been done in Italy, assessing the subjective perception of the consumer.

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

Few studies and not even properly independent: two were funded by Federalimentare, whose president is the Institutional Affairs vice president of Ferrero, i.e., one of the multinationals that most oppose the traffic light label. So, Federalimentare not only organized the official presentation event at the Farnesina, but also financed the studies supporting the Nutrinform Battery at LUISS, the private university of which Confindustria itself is a partner. Signing off on these studies was a professor with expertise in marketing.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Let's say, what expertise do you have in public health policies? These studies were funded by Federalimentare. Could you leave me a phone number, shall we make an appointment?

**MARCO FRANCESCO MAZZÙ - UNIVERSITY LUISS GUIDO CARLI MARKETING PROFESSOR**

Look, by e-mail, I'd prefer that.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

But if there are more than a hundred studies globally confirming the validity of the Nutri-score, what studies are there behind the Nutrinform?

**EMANUELE MARCON I - CREA DIRECTOR - RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

But Nutrinform doesn't need to be validated by anyone because Nutrinform merely repeats what European regulations already allow.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

What is already in the back of the pack.

**EMANUELE MARCONI - CREA DIRECTOR - RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

Correct.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

But then what is it for?

**EMANUELE MARCONI - CREA DIRECTOR - RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

No, but it makes it more easily, synoptically, more simply comprehensible.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

And let me show you, do you think it's more easily comprehensible?

**EMANUELE MARCONI - CREA DIRECTOR - RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

Compared to...

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

17 numbers.

**EMANUELE MARCONI - CREA DIRECTOR - RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

I understand but... And, instead, according to you, by looking at the label above do you get information, education, do you understand what you are doing?

**ANTONIO PRATESI - DIETICIAN PHYSICIAN - ILFATTOALIMENTARE.IT**

The Italian battery label is misleading; it's calibrated for adults but used for children. Look at what happens with a juice if the label was calibrated following the World Health Organization's guidelines for a child, look how it would be, two-thirds of the battery would be full.

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

It means that according to WHO guidelines, with one juice a child has already ingested two-thirds of the entire day's sugar requirement. Meanwhile, the Nutrinform, the battery label, has already been used optionally by Barilla, in some products by Mulino Bianco, and Ferrero, whose vice president, Paolo Mascarino, is now also president of Federalimentare.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Mr. President, hello, it's a pleasure, Lucina Paternesì, Report Rai3. Can I ask you two questions about the Nutri-score?

**PAOLO MASCARINO - FEDERALMINETARE PRESIDENT AND FERRERO INSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS VICE PRESIDENT**

I'm here today -- that is, the day is dedicated to...

**FEDERALMENTARE PRESS OFFICE**

We'll send you the statement.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Yes, sure, but I have to ask a question, a couple of questions to the President.

**FEDERALMENTARE PRESS OFFICE**

The president does not take the floor.

**PAOLO MASCARINO - FEDERALMINETARE PRESIDENT AND FERRERO INSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS VICE PRESIDENT**

Today *is* Fiere di Parma day.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

As president of Federalimentare. Mr. president, please, excuse us just for a second, can you answer two questions about the Nutri-score? Mr. president come on, don't make me run after you. Did you make your own the label, the Nutrinform Battery? Why would Ferrero products be all orange and red?

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

Federalimentare is not talking to us, but the battery label *is* already on some Ferrero products. Only on some though, probably the healthiest ones. Instead, with the Nutri score, they would all be like this. Meanwhile, the battery label *has* made it all the way to the European Commission, after winning the approval of the industry and all trade associations.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Don't you think there is more focus in Italy on defending the Made in Italy rather than protecting health?

**FRANCESCO SOFI – ITALIAN SOCIETY OF HUMAN NUTRITION STEERING COMMITTE**

This is possible and has always been the case over the past two decades. In the past, people wouldn't think about the food-health issue, but now we have millions of data, the issue has to go primarily into the hands of the Ministry of Health.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Paternesi, from Report, Rai 3. Could I ask you some questions about the Nutri-score?

**ORAZIO SCHILLACI - MINISTER OF HEALTH**

In a little while...

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Shall we ask them at the end? We'll be waiting for you, all right, thank you.

**ORAZIO SCHILLACI - MINISTER OF HEALTH**

Later, later yes.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

He said in a little while.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Minister, will you give us these two minutes?

**ORAZIO SCHILLACI - MINISTER OF HEALTH**

Just a moment, just a moment.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

We are waiting for you!

**ORAZIO SCHILLACI - MINISTER OF HEALTH**

One moment.

**JOURNALIST**

He left.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

How come he went away!

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

And instead, in Italy, still dealing with it's the Ministry of Agricultural Policies, now including Food Sovereignty.

**FRANCESCO LOLLOBRIGIDA - MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FOOD SOVEREIGNITY AND FORESTRY**

Here's the thing, how come a tool, stating that Parmesan cheese and olive oil are not healthy foods at all, can be valid? Would you like to see the other products?

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Yes, the Nutri-score label has been studied for 30 years, the battery label has two Federalimentare-funded studies, you know?

**FRANCESCO LOLLOBRIGIDA - MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FOOD SOVEREIGNITY AND FORESTRY**

This product here, on the other hand, is B, Parmesan is D. So this one here is much better... See how the Nutri-score...it's an algorithm ... Oh look, this is organic goat cheese, it's French so there's no nationalism, organic goat cheese is D.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

Sure, frequency of consumption, sure it is full of saturated fat.

**FRANCESCO LOLLOBRIGIDA - MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FOOD SOVEREIGNITY AND FORESTRY**

So this is wrong.

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

One second, one last thing. NutriInform Battery studies.

**FRANCESCO LOLLOBRIGIDA - MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FOOD SOVEREIGNITY AND FORESTRY**

If you want to do the interview, move here.

**LAURENCE DOUGHAN - BELGIUM NUTRI-SCORE GOVERNANCE STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

If I'm a cheese lover, it will certainly not be this red E on Roquefort or Parmesan cheese to prevent me from consuming it! It will only draw my attention to the fact that this is a very salty product, and if I suffer from hypertension, for example, this information will be valuable. I will continue to eat my cheese, maybe a smaller piece though.

**LUCINA PATERNESI VOICE-OVER**

The Ministry of Economic Development has also bet big on the battery label. When current Minister of the Economy Giorgetti was head of the Ministry of Economic Development in Italy, the Nutrinform Battery also became a mobile application sponsored by Italian athlete Federica Pellegrini. But does it work?

**LUCINA PATERNESI**

This is not in the database either.

**LAURENCE DOUGHAN - BELGIUM NUTRI-SCORE GOVERNANCE STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

In its latest report, the European Commission's Research Centre expressed an opinion on the various existing labelling systems, including the Italian proposal. In its conclusions the superiority of the Nutri-score was highlighted.

**GIULIA SABELLA**

So why *is* it so difficult to adopt it at the European level?

**LAURENCE DOUGHAN - BELGIUM NUTRI-SCORE GOVERNANCE STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

There are so many interests, even and especially from those countries like Italy that are against it.

**GIULIA SABELLA**

Are there, however, producers who have lobbied?

**LAURENCE DOUGHAN - BELGIUM NUTRI-SCORE GOVERNANCE STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

Absolutely, they just didn't understand the instrument. Perhaps they are afraid of losing market share. I have a lot of respect for Italy's culinary traditions and heritage, but this public health mission requires us to put up a nutritional logo that better informs and is impactful.

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN STU DIO**

We hope that the search for information on the quality of Italian products will eventually find a synthesis with the impact and clarity of the Nutri-score label, this is also because, for a consumer who has a condition such as diabetes *it is* important to know which cereals to start the day with, and in this case choosing the product with the A label *is* essential, it helps a lot. For the Nutrinform, on the other hand, Federalimentare wrote us that the Nutrinform Battery *was* born within the Interministerial Agri-food Table. The working group initiated a collaboration to implement the scientific protocol, identifying LUISS University as an authoritative research centre to carry out the studies, then asking Federalimentare to co-finance that research. And then it informed us that within the event promoted in February 2022 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it played a mere technical role.

Instead, Prof. Mazzù's team at LUISS confirms that the research focused on consumer behaviour and marketing, because the scientific validation protocol for the Italian proposal, defined by the Higher Institute of Health and CREA, was also about consumer understanding of the label. These papers do not show whether the battery label helps consumers identify healthier foods, and that funding received, says Prof. Mazzù's team, did not influence the outcome and results of the research. However, we do not know how much they were paid.

Ferrero also wrote us, saying it has responded to the Italian institutions' call for companies to apply the battery label on products sold exclusively

in Italy, which is why the label *is* only on some products and not all. And that, when Federalimentare funded the studies at LUISS, Paolo Mascarino, Ferrero's institutional affairs vice president, was not president of Federalimentare. He was vice president, just to remind that.

We also would have liked to know how much *it* cost the Ministry of Economic Development the NutrInform Battery app, as we saw it doesn't work but they wouldn't tell us.