

## A Rhetoric Revolution

Though I don't support censorship, there are some words you will never hear me utter: words that denigrate "vegan food" and that elevate the status of meat, dairy, and eggs. When properly used, they cause no real harm, but when paired in certain phrases, their meaning becomes downright destructive.

I'm calling for no mere boycott of these seemingly innocent words. What I am calling for really is a revolution: a Rhetoric Revolution. All I ask is that we lay down our meat-dairy-egg-centric language and instead choose one that celebrates rather than belittles the plant foods of the world.

The culprits are none other than "faux," "fake," "mock," "substitute," and "imitation." Some mildly less offensive albeit not altogether appetizing-sounding variations include "analog," "alternative," and "replacement" – words that make vegan food seem strange and unappealing. After all, who wants to eat an "analog"?

### Milk

Not only do I call plant-based milks what they are (*e.g.* soy, almond, rice, oat, hazelnut – *never* "milk substitute" and *never* "mylk,"), I also think it's important to do the same when referring to animal-based milk. The dairy industry likes to think they own the word "milk," so to refer to cow's milk simply as "milk" is to allow them to usurp that word. Besides, how do I know you're not talking about lion's milk, rat's milk, or human's milk? Let's always call it what it is.

### Butter

We already use the word "butter" to refer to *nut* and *fruit* butters (peanut, almond, cashew, apple, for instance) or other fats that are solid at room temperature, such as cocoa butter and Shea butter. Choose, then, "non-dairy butter" – *never* "imitation" and *never* "butter substitute."

### Meat

I even propose we take back the word "meat," which comes from the Old English word *mete* and originally referred to something that was *eaten* and not *drunk*. It was simply *food* rather than a *beverage*. We already say "coconut meat" and "nut meat," so why shouldn't we embrace "grain meat," "soy meat," and "wheat meat" and reject "faux meat." Burgers or deli slices made from these plant foods are not *fake*; they're made from *real* food and *real* ingredients.

When we use words that make plant-based foods seem *unreal* and *unappetizing*, we foster the public perception that these foods are just that. If we reclaim the language around plant-based foods, we can go a long way in mainstreaming the vegan ethic.

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SOURCES: Dictionary.com/OED:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/meat>