

Questions received on 19 May 2021 (some have been combined)

Answers from Bruno Rossignol, head of EPFL's Catering and Shops Unit (RESCO)

**Why is Holy Cow not taking part in the meat-free days?**

**Bruno Rossignol:** Catering providers in the northern part of the campus, which is open to the public, are treated differently from EPFL catering outlets. We'll start working on this aspect of our provision in 2022.

**For health reasons, do you have any plans to expand the range of wholegrain options, such as wholegrain rice and pasta, or to offer a choice between white and wholegrain rice?**

**BR:** Wholegrain foods are already widely available on campus. But we plan to expand the range of options in the future as we continue developing our nutriMenu tool. We'll also be covering this aspect in upcoming training

**Food products will be eco-rated from September. How will the score be calculated, and by whom?**

**BR:** The eco-ratings we plan to publish in September will be calculated by Beelong, an external provider. RESCO will oversee the process.

**Do you plan to give students more of a say in this process? And if so, how?**

**BR:** At RESCO, we've already consulted extensively with student associations - AGEPoly, Unipoly and Castor Freegan. Students also sit on various working groups, including the one for the catering tender.

**The Selecta vending machines (food, Starbucks coffee, etc.) have been removed. Will they be replaced?**

**BR:** Yes. We're going to replace them with new Localomat vending machines, offering locally sourced food.

**Does the strategy include Le Négoce, the campus grocery store?**

**BR:** Yes, of course. Le Négoce is covered under the "Retail" arm of the strategy.

**Will there be a way to find out the Nutriscore rating for takeout meals?**

**BR:** Yes, this is one of the next steps in our nutriMenu development program, which will be happening in 2022. Our near-term plan is to open up access to nutriMenu to the entire EPFL community, so everyone can make informed

**Environmentally speaking, what we eat matters more than where our food comes from. So why this focus on**

**BR:** Because locally sourced food is more nutritious and better for the environment. And it's cheaper, too!

**Will the catering options accommodate diabetics?**

**BR:** We're determined to offer the widest possible choice of options to accommodate every requirement. We're currently working on a new platform where people can see what menus are available. In a few weeks' time, we'll be adding pictograms showing which products and dishes are suitable for diabetics, people with food intolerances, I'm personally interested in eco-friendly cleaning products. Where can I get more information about this?

**BR:** Our tender specifications require candidates to use eco-friendly cleaning products, such as those carrying the EU Ecolabel. It's up to catering providers to put forward their own proposals.

**Are there plans to expand the Bassenges farm? Can we buy produce directly from the farm?**

**BR:** There aren't currently any plans to expand the Bassenges farm beyond its existing seven-hectare footprint. The farm shop is open to the public five days a week.

**Price is a major issue that comes up time and time again. At the moment, vegetarian and vegan meals cost the same as – and in some cases more than – dishes containing animal protein. Why isn't EPFL using price as a way to encourage behavior change? And are there any plans to review the pricing levels and structure?**

**BR:** We've already revamped our pricing policy. Vegetarian and vegan meals are now the cheapest options, priced at between 7.50 and 9 Swiss francs.

**In your presentation, you indicated student prices. What prices will apply for other members of the EPFL**

**BR:** The cost for EPFL employees is 11 Swiss francs per meal. Non-community members pay 13 Swiss francs. Catering providers are free to set their own prices for special dishes.

**Aside from nutrition, what about waiting lines? They're getting longer now that students are back on campus (albeit with fewer outlets open). And will the new RTS building place even more strain on the system?**

**BR:** RTS will have its own restaurant. And starting in September, you'll be able to use the Pick & Go app to order

**How can EPFL use its expertise in science and technology to support better nutrition?**

**Christian Schwab:** Technology isn't a silver bullet. But it undoubtedly has its uses in terms of improving the quality of the food we eat and building more sustainable food systems. At EPFL, we've identified three areas where we can contribute – areas where our knowledge and skills are a good fit for the structural problems facing today's food systems. The first is sustainable packaging, where we're exploring more environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastics. The second is precision nutrition, where we're harnessing our expertise in metabolism, genomics and the human microbiome to promote healthier eating as a way to prevent health problems later in life. And the third is digital technology, which has the potential to solve many of the problems facing our food systems: improving traceability, limiting the amount of chemicals used on farms, and even reducing waste, which is especially important given that 32% of the food produced worldwide never makes it onto our plates. Many of the I'm worried that EPFL employees aren't represented in this process. Since most staff members are older than the students, there may be issues or concerns that aren't being raised.

**BR:** Employees are well-represented on the Catering Committee (see LEX 1.9.2). Feel free to contact us if you have any specific questions or comments.

**Is it really true to say that EPFL is ahead of the curve when it comes to campus catering? Some universities have already gone fully vegetarian.**

**BR:** EPFL isn't a trend-setter by any means. In February 2019, I joined Aurore Nembrini from EPFL's Sustainability unit on a visit to a university in Berlin, which began the process we're embarking on now back in 1990. But do we really want to become a fully vegetarian campus? That isn't our aim. Instead, our emphasis is on choice: a wide range of healthy dishes, catering to all tastes and preferences, and genuine equality between meat and meat-free

**I'd like to ask about the "one vegetarian meal per week" campaign. Some members of the community are opposed to the idea because they don't like being told what to eat. So why not give customers a choice, with catering providers offering a meat-free option each week but not necessarily on a particular day? That way,**

**BR:** The EPFL 20–30 sustainable catering strategy is about raising awareness across the whole community. So if you really don't want to eat one vegetarian meal per week, you can always head to one of the outlets in the northern part of the campus, get your meal delivered to campus, or bring your own food from home.

**How can students access the Food Innovation Lab?**

**BR:** The Food Innovation Lab was set up by Christian Schwab, so please refer such questions to him.

**Don't you think it's over the top to deprive people of the choice to eat meat if they want to? Wouldn't it be better to make eating meat a less attractive option?**

**BR:** How do we make eating meat a less attractive option? That's an excellent question. If you come up with an

**What's your view of soil-less (non-traditional) farming methods?**

**BR:** Soil-less cultivation is the future. In my view, it's an environmentally friendly way of growing local produce.

**Le Vinci and Le Parmentier were the last remaining restaurants run as small, independent businesses. In the future, can we expect all EPFL catering contracts to be awarded to large corporations?**

**BR:** No, that's definitely not our aim. We have a standard tender process for all our outlets. Bids are reviewed by a committee, which awards contracts based on merit.

**How do you view soybeans and tofu in terms of sustainability? Will these products be available on campus?**

**BR:** Soybeans and tofu are already part of our menus, and we work with Swissoja, a Geneva-based company that has been making soybean-based products since 1976.

**Some dishes marked as vegetarian in the PocketCampus app aren't actually vegetarian at all. How will you make sure the app provides accurate information?**

**BR:** We're still putting the finishing touches on the app.

**Given the immense harm that fishing causes to the oceans and to biodiversity, do you have any plans to phase out fish – most of which isn't locally sourced – from EPFL's menus?**

**BR:** The amount of fish eaten on campus is relatively small, and we don't want to take that option away from people. But we do support sustainable fisheries and we source sustainability-certified catches.

**The vast majority of people (other than those with allergies or other dietary requirements) can get all the nutrients they need and live healthy lives on a vegetarian diet. We also know that meat-based diets do more harm to the environment (and, according to some studies, to human health) than plant-based diets. Given that many people are likely unaware of the environmental and health impacts of the food they eat, are you planning**

**BR:** Yes, there are various public outreach campaigns in the pipeline, starting in 2022.

**At the moment, there's a shortage of consistent, daily food options for vegetarians and people with food allergies. How do you plan to address this issue?**

**BR:** We're going to open a new restaurant, Le Native, with a menu split 50:50 between vegan and vegetarian options. And from September, all dishes containing food allergens will be clearly marked.

**How will you make the monitoring data and conclusions available to the EPFL community? For example, could you share this information through one-time or ongoing training for PhD students, employees or the general**

**BR:** Every time we carry out a monitoring exercise, we'll make this clear in the catering section of the EPFL website. We're also in talks with a couple of research labs about two new projects, and we've discussed training plans with