

Soviet 'Vegetarian' Borscht Recipe Contains Pork Fat, Angers Vegetarians

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Jars of “vegetarian” borsch sold in Belarus have drawn consumer outrage with the recipe's inclusion of pork fat, a news report said.

The manufacturer of the borsch, a canned foods factory in the Belarussian town of Bykhov, dismissed the complaints, adding it had no intention of changing the recipe because customers reportedly prefer the animal fat-based variety of the “vegetarian” dish, Belarus's Onliner.by news portal reported Wednesday.

Labels on the jars identify the soup as “vegetarian,” but the ingredients list includes pork fat, according to photos and descriptions on the manufacturer's website.

“We have been making this borsch for a long time, since the Soviet era,” an unidentified spokesperson for the factory was quoted by Onliner as saying, adding that the recipe was

created by the Belarussian Academy of Science, had received government approval and was in line with food quality standards.

“We can make the 'vegetarian' borsch with vegetable oil,” the spokesperson was quoted as saying. “If there is demand, if there are orders, we will, but generally, people prefer animal fats or a combination of fats.”

Vegetarian consumers are outraged by the misleading packaging, and insist the borsch must not be advertised as “vegetarian.”

“You know, it's not fun when a product is called vegetarian, but in reality is not such,” a man identified by his first name Alexei, a vegetarian from Belarussian capital Minsk, was quoted as saying in a letter to Onliner.

“A factory makes a product with such a name, but does not even bother to find out what these people [vegetarians] actually eat,” Alexei was quoted as saying. “Do they mean that if there is no meat, the dish becomes vegetarian? A strange way of thinking. They are deceiving the customer.”

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