

FALSE NARRATIVE

Italian food company Barilla withdrew its pasta due to insect contamination

ENGLISH (US) ▾

The False Narrative

The Italy-based international food company Barilla had to withdraw its pasta from the market because of insect contamination.

Variations of this False Narrative

- Italian food company Barilla makes insect-based pasta.

The Facts

The claim that Italian food company Barilla withdrew its pasta from the Italian market due to insect contamination is baseless.

Andrea Belli, communications manager at the Barilla Group, told NewsGuard in a June 2023 email: "Barilla clearly and categorically denies rumors that the company was involved in a product withdrawal. No product with withdrawal and, therefore, no withdrawal of pasta contaminated with insects occurred."

Indeed, the official website of the Italian Ministry of Health regularly updates a list of goods withdrawn from the market, and as of June 19, 2023, there was no record that any Barilla products were withdrawn or recalled since 2017. Moreover, there is no mention of a withdrawal on Barilla's website or by any credible news outlets.

This narrative apparently first began circulating in October 2022, after the company-affiliated Barilla Foundation, which promotes research on sustainability, tweeted out a video in which an Italian comedian talked about the nutritional value of insect-based food. Many social media users and news sites reacted to the video by claiming that Barilla was already using or planned to use insects in the production of its pasta.

Some Italian news sites that NewsGuard has found to have repeatedly published false content — including Italiador.com and Grandelinganno.it — even launched a digital campaign to boycott the company, often accompanying posts with the hashtag #BoicottaBarilla (#BoycottBarilla).

On Nov. 2, 2022, the Barilla Foundation removed the video from its accounts, and the company issued a press release stating, "The Barilla Group has never announced the launch of products made with insect flour and has no interest in expanding its business in this direction."

Nevertheless, the false claim has continued to circulate, despite the company's denials and despite several fact-checks by media organizations that determined that there is no truth to the claim.

How the False Narrative Emerged

According to Italian fact-checker Open.online, the claim that insect contamination caused Barilla to withdraw its pasta from the market originated in a video published by anonymous TikTok user @giornaletg5. The text accompanying the video stated: "Barilla pasta withdrawn from the market. 'Insects in the pasta.' Now it's official."

The @giornaletg5 account used the logo of Italian news site FanPage.it in its profile photo, although it has no known connection to the site. The account has since been deleted, but not before the video had garnered more than 1.8 million views on TikTok as of February 2023. Screenshots of the video also circulated on Facebook.

Background

Claims about insect-based foods got a boost on social media following a decision by the European Commission in early 2023 to approve the use of the larvae of mealworms and a powder form of house crickets as novel foods. Many of these claims have targeted popular food brands, including Coca-Cola, Kinder, and Mulino Bianco — also part of the Barilla Group — and supermarket chains such as Lidl and Coop, falsely accusing them of secretly using insects in their products.

Written by: Sara Badilini
 Edited by: Virginia Padovese, Sophia Tewa, Dina Contini, Eric Efron

Examples of this False Narrative

- https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid029YDZmeDPsKUbACYpJkbVevJ u9h6QaYh9UtQHcYm9sRAqr43DNjLDrFsGz385zPEl&id=10000617944556

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- <https://www.facebook.com/lorena.nocilla/posts/pfbid0GaPCdn4emFISwvYqzbrNsosPW1xZ QGdoTXn9YjUmfk2kfv3wi7HfXtQm5ibFvI>

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Risk of Harm

Medium

First Appeared

October, 2022

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 Business & Finance

Myth Locations

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Barilla

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Barilla AND insetti AND "ritirata dal commercio"

Keywords and #s

#pastabarilla
 #BoycottBarilla

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Published: June 19, 2023
 Last Updated: March 11, 2024

• <https://www.facebook.com/krissi.misi/posts/pfbid02hbu8gbX8QfdtmUDhvX1FreGhE9GyuCHTS3wqQI5MhiBX52KUXPS7WjcvLm8wZzml>

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"Arriva la conferma, grilli nella pasta degli italiani! Anche Barilla co...Altro..."

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• <https://www.dcnnews.it/2022/11/02/barilla-e-lindegno-spot-per-preannunciare-alle-pecorelle-che-mettera-farina-di-insetti-nella-sua-schifosa-pasta/>

"Anche Barilla apre alla ai prodotti alimentari realizzati con farina di insetti e lo fa con un video."

 dcnnews.it (en_ALL)

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• <https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZT81noNTP/>

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• <https://www.tiktok.com/@giornaletg5/video/7201195927359524102>

"Pasta Barilla ritirata dal commercio"

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Reliable Sources[Ⓞ]

<https://facta.news/antibufale/2023/03/06/barilla-pasta-ritirata-insetti/>

<https://www.open.online/2023/02/27/pasta-barilla-insetti-fc/#:~:text=La%20notizia%20secondo%20cui%20i,hype%2C%20ma%20priva%20di%20fondamento.>

https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/news/p3_2_1_3_5.jsp?lingua=italiano&menu=notizie&p=avvisi&tipo=richiami&tasto=richiami&solorichiami.page=0

<https://www.fanpage.it>

https://twitter.com/barillagroup/status/1587872622586494979?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1587872622586494979%7Ctwgr%5E6f14fd39237d2f48d2c56d9f64d9ab1aa4c36922%7Ctwcon%5Es1_dref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.matricedigitale.it%2Faltro%2Fboicottare-la-barilla-indignazione-per-un-video-sugli-insetti-a-tavola%2F

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