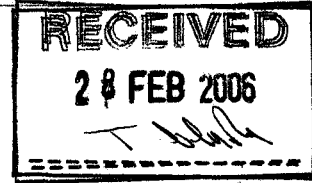


Clarke A (Tony)

From: lisa.webb@nfus.org.uk
Sent: 28 February 2006 16:39
To: Country of Origin of Beef
Subject: : Beef Labelling Consultation



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Lisa Webb
NFU Scotland
Tel: 0131 472 4034
Mob: 07789 796582
www.nfus.org.uk

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Date : 24 February 2006
To : Elizabeth Baird
From : Lisa Webb
Direct dial : 0131 4724034
E-mail address : lisa.webb@nfus.org.uk

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF BEEF IN THE FOOD SERVICE SECTOR

1. NFU Scotland welcomes this opportunity to comment on the consultation on Country of Origin of Beef in the Food Service Sector. Our submission responds to the questions contained in the consultation as well as offering feedback on related issues.
2. In summary, the NFU Scotland view is:
 - It should be made compulsory for the food service sector to inform customers of the country of origin of the beef they sell.
 - Relying upon voluntary labelling is not sufficient.

Consultation Questions

Question 1: Do you consider that the current requirements provide adequate information to consumers of beef in the food service sector?

3. We do not believe that the current requirements provide adequate information to consumers as there is no requirement to state the country of origin.

Question 2: Do you consider that the absence of country of origin information confuses consumers about the source of beef in the food service sector?

4. With no mandatory requirement to inform customers of the origin of beef customers can easily be confused. Currently customers can find themselves making assumptions as to where the beef they are served originates.

Question 3: If you consider that the current requirements are not adequate, do you favour a voluntary or compulsory scheme to indicate country of origin of beef in the food service sector?

5. NFU Scotland believes that there needs to be a compulsory scheme. If left as a voluntary measure only establishments selling home produced beef are likely to promote country of origin. Without compulsory country of origin labelling customers are likely to be left to make assumptions as to the origin of beef in many premises.

Question 4: Do you agree with the proposed approach?

6. NFUS believes that the approach proposed is broadly correct. Wherever practically possible we believe the consumer should be able to know from what region in the UK beef originates, for example Scotland, rather than a statement that the beef was of UK

origin. In addition to the proposed approach we believe that mince should be included within the requirements as many popular products sold are derived from minced beef i.e. lasagne, chilli etc.

Question 5: Do you consider that the requirement should be applied to veal as well as to beef?

7. We believe that the requirement should apply to both veal and beef.

Question 6: Do you agree with the proposals for monitoring and enforcement?

8. We believe that Environmental Health Officers should carry out checks in order to ensure that what is stated on menus can be supported by purchase evidence for example purchase receipts.

Question 7: Do you agree that a civil action would be appropriate?

9. NFUS believe that penalties for misrepresentation or failure to inform should be enforced and that the fine of up to £5,000 is adequate. If an establishment is caught we believe that civil action should be taken.

Additional Comments

10. NFUS believe that the food service sector should be required to decode all labels to show a clear country of origin. We feel that outlets need to be specific as to what country their beef comes from, to state that meat will be either Scotch or Argentinean unless otherwise stated is not acceptable. The option of 'we obtain our beef from a number of sources, EC, and non EC' is not acceptable either as this removes the onus from the outlet to provide the consumer with the full facts. Allowing outlets to offer vague descriptions of source could allow them to charge their products at a prime price even although they may be using cheap imported meat.