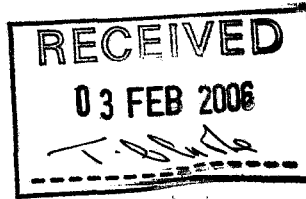


CE/VC

31 January 2006



Scottish Executive
Country of Origin Consultation
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Environmental and Consumer Protection
Department
Director: Stewart R Heggie
12 Hill Terrace
Arbroath
Angus, DD11 1AH
Tel: 01241 435600
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Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation Paper – Country of Origin of Beef in the Food Service Section

I refer to the above and enclose a copy of a response from Angus Council, Environmental & Consumer Protection Department.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Craig Easson".

Craig Easson
Environmental Health Officer

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

Response: The requirement under Section 15 of the Food Safety Act 1990 that food cannot be falsely described or presented does not provide that adequate information is given to consumers in the food service sector to determine the origin of the product.

Such information is available to consumers in the retail sector through separate labelling requirements and making this information available in the food service sector would ensure that consumers have adequate information on which to base their purchasing decisions.

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?

Response: Terms such as "locally sourced", "homemade", "Aberdeen Angus" and "Farmfresh" when used as part of a description on a menu are often added to infer that the beef used is Scottish.

Provision of country of origin information would serve to remove such information.

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?

Response: Given that there are no public health or food safety issues attached to this proposal it is unlikely that enforcement authorities would attach a high priority to statutory enforcement of this matter.

A voluntary scheme incorporating wide publicity would be a more appropriate method of providing the consumer with accurate information.

Question 4: Do you agree with the proposed approach?

Response: If a regulatory rather than voluntary scheme were to be introduced then the proposal outlined would be in general provide a sensible and practical approach to this.

The proposal, that the food service sector should be required to decode the abattoir/cutting plant health mark information displayed on the labelling to determine whether beef is Scottish, would provide an added burden to that sector which is not at present required of the retail sector who are only required to provide the abattoir/cutting plant registration number.

Providing the information on a voluntary basis would therefore serve to ensure that the requirements relating to either sector are equitable.

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

Response: For reasons of consistency the requirement should be applied to all bovine meat including veal.

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

Response: The proposals provide a practical approach to monitoring and enforcement, Environmental Health Officer's and Food Safety Officer's already carry out similar checks on labelling and menu claims during periodic inspections.

Whilst this additional check would not require a great deal of officer time it should be noted that a number of similar requirements have recently been attached to officers duties creating a burden on resources.

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

Response: It is appreciated that the offence may be considered less serious than an offence under the Food Labelling Regulations, however all existing Food Labelling and Food Safety Legislation provide for statutory action to be taken through the Procurator Fiscal Service.

These proposed Regulations should remain consistent with that.

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF BEEF IN THE FOOD SERVICE
RESPONDEE INFORMATION FORM**

Please complete the details below and attach it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately:

Name:

Postal Address:

Consultation title: **Country of Origin of Beef in the Food Service Sector**

1. Are you responding as: (please tick one box)

- (a) an individual (go to 2a/b)
- (b) on behalf of a group or organisation (go to 2c)

2a. INDIVIDUALS:

Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in SE library and/or on SE website)?

- Yes (go to 2b below)
- No, not at all

2b. Where *confidentiality is not requested*, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (please tick one of the following boxes)

- Yes, make my response, name and address all available
- Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address
- Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

2c ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

Your name and address as respondents *will be* made available to the public (in the SE library and/or on SE website). Are you content for your response to be made available also?

- Yes
- No

SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

3. We will share your response internally with other SE policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

- Yes No

