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Date: 7 December 2005

Dear Sir

**Consultation Paper - Country of Origin of Beef in the Food Service Sector**

In response to the above letter of 15 November 2005, I should like to make the following comments and replies to the questions asked.

Question 1 - No as most consumers will not ask, but clearly a large number of consumers will presume the country of origin and are therefore subject to a form of misleading non information.

Question 2 - Yes I am sure that many of my own contacts who have asked are surprised at the small percentage of meat from Scotland is in the beef they consume whilst eating out.

Question 3 - Basically I would prefer a compulsory scheme, however perhaps for meat products such as steak pies etc, as opposed to joints or cuts of beef, that the country of origin of the meat for products would be voluntary.

Question 4 - Yes I do agree with the proposed approach, I think it is very practical and it is indeed doable for most of the catering outlets including small ones that we deal with. It does also allow for products produced in house by a caterer to reveal voluntarily the source of beef.

Question 5 - It is probably less confusing if it is also applied to veal, however veal is rarely seen on the menu in this area. The proposal would therefore have no significant effect in this area. However, when finding veal on the menu elsewhere, I would, given the publicity about the raising of veal in some countries, be pleased to know that it had been raised in the UK to standards which we find acceptable.

Question /

*Ken Jones – Environmental Health Manager*

2.

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Question 6 - No I think that routine monitoring during food standards inspections of caterers should be carried out. We do already at the request of some industrial sectors carry out tests for adulteration of certain spirits. Checking that beef was being properly described as to country of origin would be relatively straightforward. It would be made more straightforward if the requirement to retain beef labelling information was included in the legislation. I would suggest that enforcement was by way of provision for an enforcement notice similar to food hygiene improvement notice, with similar penalties and recourse should the notice be ignored. Clearly most authorities would not go straight to notice if that were available and would routinely deal with these matters as they deal with food labelling matters by discussion and advice to businesses. However, referring these sort of items to the Procurator Fiscal can be extremely frustrating as PF's are very busy and these matters appear to them to be relatively minor even though many steps will have been taken to try to secure compliance prior to referral to the PF.

Question 7 - We are currently used to criminal prosecution and would find the mechanism of civil action difficult to pursue. I imagine civil action as proposed would require the Council's solicitors to be involved, placing a strain on an already stretched resource.

### General Comments

I was surprised when asking friends and colleagues of the almost 100% endorsement of a proposal that restaurants etc should provide country of origin labelling for beef. Many of those asked said why only beef. One responded that he is more concerned about the country of origin of poultry rather than beef.

When discussed with the Environmental Health Food Enforcement Team, the enforcement of this additional piece of food standard legislation should it arise would prove helpful in giving notice to businesses in the catering sector that we are concerned with standard and descriptions of foods that appear on menus. This activity already takes place, however most of this is where menus make specific claims already. Over the years this has revealed a number of situations of mis-description of foods in the catering industry. I would like to think that this was due to ignorance, but I know in several cases it was fraud for pecuniary advantage.

I trust the above replies assist you in your deliberations.

Yours faithfully



R Swinton  
Principal Environmental Health Officer (Food)

**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: *Ron Swinton*

Postal Address: *Environmental Healths Town Hall Hawick TD9 9EF*

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