



Please reply to:
David Kilshaw
c/o Susan Aspin
Scottish Enterprise
27 Albyn Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1DB

28 February 2006

Ms Elizabeth Baird
Scottish Executive
Rural Affairs Department
Pentland House
Robb's Loan
Edinburgh
EH14 1TW



Dear Ms Baird

Consultation Paper: Country of Origin of Beef in the Food Service Sector

On behalf of the Scottish Food and Drink Industry Strategy Group (ISG) please find our response to the above consultation. The ISG are in favour of the proposal to require the food service sector in Scotland to inform consumers of the country or countries of origin of beef served. This will bring the requirements for foodservice in line with those for retail and also provide additional information to consumers to help them make an informed choice about beef while eating away from home.

Particular responses are as follows:

SECTION 3 WHY CHANGE?

Q1. Do you consider the current requirements provide adequate information to consumers of beef in the food service sector?

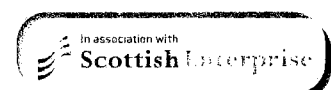
It is clear that the current requirements are not adequate. As things stand, the onus is on the consumer to be pro-active in requesting information about the source of beef, which can be both time-consuming and difficult, therefore off-putting to consumers. Research has indicated that many consumers will assume beef is sourced from this country and not realise that it may have come from outwith the UK.

The growing interest by consumers in the provenance of food, which many of the major retailers have responded to via local sourcing initiatives and prominent point of sale information, is a clear trend which this new initiative is in part responding to in a very positive manner.

Q2/

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Scottish Food & Drink is the industry working together with Scottish Enterprise - providing expert advice, making industry connections and delivering business growth.





Q2.. Do you consider that the absence of country of origin information confuses consumers about the source of beef in the food service sector?

It does not confuse them as such, but it makes it difficult for consumers to make an informed choice about the food they are eating. It also allows food service outlets to hide behind the assumption of many consumers that the beef is sourced from within the UK, when in fact research has shown that a high proportion is not.

Q3. 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?

We are in favour of a compulsory scheme. This would bring labelling in line with the retail sector, and would be less confusing to the consumer as they would understand that the country of origin information is consistently available from all foodservice outlets. A voluntary scheme will lack impact, and will not progress things from the current position.

SECTION 4 – NATURE OF PROPOSAL

Q4. Do you agree with the proposed approach? Please explain your reasons.

Restricting country of origin labelling to dishes made from fresh, chilled or frozen beef means it is based on information that is currently available rather than applying additional onerous requirements on suppliers and food service operators and is therefore a sensible approach.

Applying this requirement to the foodservice sector in its widest definition provides consistency for the consumer but also for the supply chain, eradicating any potential grey areas of how outlets are defined. The consumer's need for information is the same regardless of which particular type of outlet they are dining in.

Q5. Do you consider the requirement should be applied to veal as well as beef?

For clarity and consistency, this approach should also be applied to veal.

We have no comments to make on questions 6 and 7 which relate to monitoring and enforcement.

In/



In conclusion, the Scottish Food and Drink Industry Strategy Group welcome this proposal and also urge the Scottish Executive to consider whether over time country of origin labelling could be extended to other foods with a Scottish identity, particularly other proteins. This would serve to provide information to consumers to enable an informed choice to be made, and reflects the growing interest from consumers in where food is sourced.

For information, we attach in appendix 1 a list of members of the Scottish Food and Drink Industry Strategy Group.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DKILSHAW", with a long horizontal line underneath.

DAVID KILSHAW
Chairman
Scottish Food and Drink Industry Strategy Group

APPENDIX 1

Scottish Food & Drink Industry Strategy Group

INDUSTRY MEMBERS

Name	Address
Mr David Kilshaw (ISG Chairman)	Group Managing Director Food Partners Ltd
Mr Hans Baumann	Managing Director Donald Russell Ltd.
Mr Michael Clark	Managing Director International Fish Cannery (Scotland)
Mr Paul Grant	Managing Director MacKays Hudsons Ltd.
Mr Alan Hardie	Managing Director Paterson Arran Ltd
Mr Muir Hunter	Chief Executive Scot Trout & Salmon Ltd
Mr Campbell Laird	Managing Director Three Brand Design
Mr Alastair Macphie	Managing Director Macphie of Glenbervie Ltd
Mr Dennis Overton	Managing Director Aquascot Limited
Mr Robert B Graham	Managing Director Graham's Dairies Ltd
Mr Norman Soutar	Group Managing Director Baxters Food Group
Mr David Beattie	Group Chief Executive Enterprise Food Group
Mr John Kinnaird	President NFU Scotland