

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2013 - 2014, 26 February 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000200

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Country of Origin Labelling

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McLucas Jan

Question:

Has the Minister's office done or requested any work on country of origin labelling for seafood?

Answer:

Under *Standard 1.2.11 – Country of Origin Labelling* of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, country of origin labelling is a mandatory requirement for packaged food and some unpackaged fresh produce, including fresh fish. However, Standard 1.2.11 does not apply to food that is sold for immediate consumption by restaurants, caterers, canteens and various other institutions.

The House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry (the Committee) is currently conducting an inquiry into country of origin food labelling, with submissions due on 2 May 2014. Terms of Reference for the inquiry are:

The Committee will inquire into and report on country of origin food labelling. The inquiry will have particular regard to:

- whether the current Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL for food) system provides enough information for Australian consumers to make informed purchasing decisions;
- whether Australia's CoOL laws are being complied with and what, if any, are the practical limitations to compliance;
- whether improvements could be made, including to simplify the current system and/or reduce the compliance burden;
- whether Australia's CoOL laws are being circumvented by staging imports through third countries;
- the impact on Australia's international trade obligations of any proposed changes to Australia's CoOL laws.

Any consideration of further work on country of origin labelling requirements is pending the outcome of the inquiry.