



The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP

Minister for Agriculture
Federal Member for New England

Ref: MC15-002387

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your letter of 24 March 2015 about a petition received by the Standing Committee on Petitions on halal certification.

I am aware that a number of Australians are concerned about the practice of halal certification in Australia. The Australian Government supports consumers having access to information about the products they purchase. As halal certification does not risk the health and safety of consumers, the choice of any Australian business to certify or sell halal products is theirs to make.

The practice of halal certification is voluntarily entered into by individual businesses and, while a fee is provided to the halal certifier, the income produced by an Australian business from selling halal-certified products belongs to that business. Australian businesses can also export halal-certified products to international markets and thereby contribute to the Australian economy. Despite there being a wide variety of views on the subject, halal certification is essential to our large export markets, particularly for Australian meat products.

I note that the Senate Economics References Committee is currently conducting an inquiry into Third Party Certification of Food which encompasses organic, kosher, halal and genetically-modified food and general food safety certification schemes. Terms of reference for the inquiry are available at:

http://www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Economics/Food_Cert_Schemes/Terms_of_Reference

I also note that when the Standing Committee on Petitions has considered this response it will be presented in the House and be posted on the Committee's website.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention. I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

Barnaby Joyce MP

25 MAY 2015