



5 October 2021

Attn: Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**SUBJECT: ACMF response to questions on notice - Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee Inquiry: 'Meat Category Branding in Australia'**

**Questions on Notice – evidence presented by Dr Vivien Kite, ACMF, to the Committee on Thursday 16 September 2021**

*Question 1: "Would you be able to provide any information on what your producers pay to support assurance in the chicken or duck industries?"; "what we're trying to establish is the investment by industry to support the raising claims, the consumer requests for information or the consumer confidence in the industry. What do both the chicken and duck industries do to support that sort of consumer confidence?"*

ACMF Response: We requested data from the 6 major chicken companies in the chicken industry in order to respond to this question. We received responses from companies who between them produce approximately 40% of all chicken produced in Australia. These companies invest approximately \$13 million each year to support consumer confidence /assurance. This includes the cost of the systems and resources to support assurance claims, quality, food safety, sustainability and animal welfare across their businesses. It **does not** include any marketing costs to promote claims etc or development cost to create brands.

Assuming this level of investment is 'typical' of the rest of the industry, which we believe it would be reasonable to assume, scaling this figure up to the entire industry, this would represent an investment in excess of \$32 million pa.

*Question 2: "Could we ask you to provide the AgriFutures report to the committee to form part of our considerations."*

ACMF Response: The report referred to is now been published and is available online at <https://www.agrifutures.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/20-111.pdf>

A copy of the report is also attached to the email through which this letter is provided.

**Supplementary information related to evidence presented during the hearing**

During the hearing, I made the following offer:

*... I do have an example from another customer who wrote me a letter and emailed it and said they had sent that very same letter to the ACCC. So to hear that they haven't received these sorts of complaints really did surprise me. If you wish, I probably could go back to that same consumer and ask them if they would mind me passing that on."*

The Committee Chair responded to this offer as follows:

*“...when the ACCC gives evidence, we will certainly be asking them to explain why this specific example of such a significant issue did not make them react. I assume that the ACCC will be following this and will potentially contact you directly to ask you for the date of the correspondence and the consumer's name.”*

As the ACCC did not in fact contact me direct for this information, I shall provide the information herein (with the approval of the complainant). This is a screenshot of the complaint received by email:

Misleading Advertising

CB Clare Buckley <buckleysrural@outlook.com>  
To : ACCC (Vivien Kite)  
You forwarded this message on 17/9/2021 10:50 AM  
Misleading Butter Chicken Product.pdf 297 kB

Mon 10/01/2021 3:07 PM

Reply | Reply All | Forward | ...

Please see attached information about a plant based product I purchased over the weekend assuming it was chicken. As a producer for Beef and Lamb I have taken great offence in being misled and feel that your organisation should strongly pursue such companies that are using false and misleading advertising. I have sent this information to the ACCC.

If you believe I should send my complaint to another organisation please let me know.

Kind Regards  
Clare Buckley

**Buckley's Rural Services Pty Ltd**  
**Jim & Clare Buckley**

A screenshot of the attachment to this email is provided here:

Misleading advertising - I was duped

So I didn't have any leftover frozen meals in my freezer to go away to a show over the weekend - so I purchased a pre-made meal from Woolworths.

The packaging clearly states, "Butter Chicken".

However, after heating the meal and pulling it out of the microwave it was clearly NOT chicken.... or if it was there was something very wrong with it.

So after re reading the packaging and in close to illegible/disguised writing it does state made with plants. However, this is a soy product.

Now my issue isn't regarding plant based, soy or vegetarian meals if people choose to buy them....

BUT surely as a consumer if I read something that states "butter chicken" I should confidently assume this product contains chicken.

The packaging is clearly misleading.

Additional false information

Contains plant based meat - there is no meat in this product

Succulent plant based chicken - there is no such thing as plant based chicken. Its either chicken or a plant.

Made with Plants is actually the trading name of the company..... like Repco, Woolworths, Target etc

Meat is meat - IT IS MISLEADING to state plant based, soy etc is anything other than what it is.



I have investigated the product referred to in this consumer's complaint, and found that it is still being sold with the labelling described by the complainant: <https://madewithplants.com.au/products/>

Yours sincerely,

**Vivien Kite**  
**Executive Director, ACMF**