



McSHANE'S PRODUCE

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SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE'S INQUIRY INTO THE FOOD STANDARDS AMENDMENT (TRUTH IN LABELLING LAWS) BILL 2009

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About McShane's Produce

McShane's Produce is a family farming enterprise located in the Dalbeg Valley in North Queensland, producing zucchini and squash in a sustainable rotation with sugar cane. Our environmentally friendly farming practice has been recognised by Sustainable Landscapes and Reef Rescue programs. McShane's Produce employ up to 32 staff during the production season.

Introduction

As a grower concerned with the ever increasing food imports into Australia, McShane's Produce welcomes the opportunity to be able to make a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Economics Inquiry into the Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling Laws) Bill 2009.

We, along with friends, have long been frustrated with the lack of clarity to choose to buy Australian tinned, packaged and frozen food. A 2009 survey found that 82.5% of supermarket shoppers checked the labels for Australian grown product most of the time.

Consumer Choice

Consumers have a right to know where their food comes from. It is their choice. It is increasingly difficult to decipher exactly where the food in the can/package has come from. The package may have the kangaroo on it but that doesn't mean the food is Australian.

Australian Growers want an equal opportunity to compete on an equal market. The current labelling system does not allow this, as consumers are confused by the labelling into believing the product they are buying is Australian.

According to Standard 1.2.11 editorial note paragraph 2 "false or misleading representations concerning the place of origin of goods are prohibited". On many occasions when buying goods one is not sure of the country of origin. Eg a map of Australia with Australian made printed in it. A consumer would assume the contents of the jar were Australian, whereas when reading the small print, it is actually only made in Australia from local and imported ingredients including the jar and labelling with no clear identification of exactly how much of the content of the jar is Australian.

Consumers choose to buy Australian for many reasons –

- Other countries lack of environmental management
- Food contamination
- Australia's high food safety standard
- Support for Australian farmers and Australian jobs

- Preferring to buy locally produced foodstuffs
- Food miles and carbon emissions
- Human rights considerations

Comments to the Bill

The current definition of Australian Grown and Product of Australia is “*that each significant ingredient has been grown or come from Australia, and that all or virtually all of the processes involved in the production of the goods have occurred in Australia*”.

We support legislation that would make this the definition for Made in Australia, so as not to exclude products that are 100% Australian produce with added imported seasoning. We also support changes that would exclude the packaging, product container, product label in any calculation including the transformation of the foodstuff.

McShanes’ Produce is keen to see that the current rules of Country of Origin labelling on fresh fruit and vegetables is tightened to prevent retailers from mixing local and imported produce together. We would like legislation to be changed to ensure Australian produce and imported produce are labelled separately.

Easy to read labels

We would like to put forward an alternate Country of Origin labelling system that would simplify the current scheme.

It is a legal requirement that the contents of the package are listed. This can be easily added to by colour coding the Australian content.

Instead of the current Australian made, Australian Product or Australian Grown labels, a label as shown below, would clearly show exactly what content of the food was Australian and what content was imported and what country it came from. A supplier would not be able to manipulate this system. The consumer would be able to see clearly where the contents of the packaged food came from. The label can also show where the food was processed, GMO’s etc

Contents		0%	25%	50%	100%
75%	Wheat Bran	Aust		USA	
21%	Wholegrain oats	Aust			
	Sugar	Aust			
	Malt Extract (Barley)	Canada			
	Minerals(calcium Carbonate,Iron)	Germany			
	Salt	China			
	Vitamins (Niacin,E,Bi,3-carotene)	Germany			
	Processed	Aust			
0%	Genetically modified organisms				

Sample label

