



7 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 written question on notice - Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee Inquiry: 'Meat Category Branding in Australia'**

The ACMF received the following written question on notice:

*"In your submission you suggest the increase in sales of alternative proteins in Australia will see a decline in demand for Australian-produced grains as animal feed. CSIRO, AgriFutures and Food Innovation Australia have all said that the growth of the alternative proteins sector is complementary to the growth of traditional agriculture in Australia.*

*For example, AgriFutures stated "the emerging market for alternative proteins should be seen not as a threat ...but as a means of diversifying choices ... to fill the growing gap between global protein demand and supply".*

- *Under what peer-reviewed modelling does an increase in alternative protein sales negatively impact chicken meat sales and in turn demand for Australian-grown grain, and if it exists, can you please provide more details of this peer-reviewed modelling to the inquiry?"*

**ACMF response:**

The ACMF does not have any modelling, peer-reviewed or otherwise, on this matter. However, we have **actual** evidence of consumers who mistakenly purchased plant-based manufactured protein products thinking they were chicken. Each of these purchases (all products manufactured predominantly manufactured from overseas ingredients) represents the loss of a sale of a chicken product, the predominant ingredient into which is Australian-grown grain. Examples of these losses were provided in our original submission, in evidence presented to the hearing, and in our response to questions on notice. The examples we provided likely represent the tip of the iceberg, as highlighted by the nationally representative survey of 1,000 Australians recently undertaken by ISO accredited market research agency, Pollinate (<https://rmac.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Pollinate-National-Consumer-Research.pdf>), which was publicly released with full methodology and supporting data, and which showed that:

- 1 in 3 consumers think they've mistaken plant-based protein for animal meat due to its packaging in the past.
- Almost 2 in 3 believe that other people may have also made the same mistake.

We note a recent example where this loss of a sale has also worked in the opposite direction i.e. chicken has gained a sale and plant based manufactured protein has lost a sale (as reported here:

<https://7news.com.au/lifestyle/food/coles-responds-after-vegan-accuses-supermarket-of-tricking-her-into-eating-chicken-c-4121418> ). However, this only serves to highlight the confusion that is created by the labelling of plant-based products as 'chicken' when they are not, which has allowed retail store staff to be so confused that they placed a chicken meat product in the vegan shelves, and then the consumer seeking a

non-meat product to mistakenly purchase a product made out of chicken meat thinking that it was a vegan product.

In terms of the market for chicken meat, our expectation is that chicken meat consumption will continue to increase and the market for chicken meat will therefore continue to grow – at least in the short and medium terms – irrespective of the growth of the plant-based manufactured product market. The point we were making in our submission is that plant-based manufactured products will potentially take away some of the potential growth of the chicken market, and that this in turn will have an impact on the potential size of the market for locally grown Australian grains, as plant-based manufactured protein products – unlike the case for chicken – will not necessarily be predominantly based on locally grown grains produced by Australian farmers.

Finally, I note that the written question on notice asks the ACMF for any “peer-reviewed modelling” that underpins the comments we have made. To my knowledge, none of the references cited in this question (*viz* from reports provided by CSIRO, AgriFutures and Food Innovation Australia), have published any of their modelling work in the peer-reviewed literature. They may have published their reports, but that does not mean that it has been peer-reviewed. Until the modelling is exposed to a peer-review process through exposure and assessment in the peer-reviewed literature, it cannot be said to have been “peer-reviewed”.

Yours sincerely,

Vivien Kite  
Executive Director, ACMF