

Scottish Executive
Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Room 259
Pentland House
47 Robb's Loan
Edinburgh
EH14 1TY

23 April 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

CONSULTATION ON THE BEEF LABELLING (COUNTRY OF ORIGIN) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS

The Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the above consultation. The purpose of the SCC is to make all consumers in Scotland matter. We do this by putting forward the consumer interest, particularly that of disadvantaged groups in society, by working with those people who can make a difference to achieve beneficial change.

The SCC has been involved in food policy for many years and Community Food and Health (Scotland) formerly named the Scottish Community Diet Project and the healthy living award are located within the SCC office.

The SCC has been involved in the discussions on the extension of the country of origin of beef labelling to the food service sector since the idea was first put forward. We replied to the original consultation in May 2006 expressing our reservations including that this was marketing rather than a food safety issue and could lead to further consumer confusion as regards quality¹.

Despite being critical of the consultation, SCC were willing to be members of the Beef Labelling Working Group set up to take this further and are committed to try and find a workable solution.

The rationale behind this proposed measure, as stated in the Objectives, is that most consumers assume the beef they are being served in restaurants and catering establishments is produced in Scotland. The stated aim is to provide a consistent approach to beef labelling and to allow consumers to know when they are eating Scottish beef.

Our reservations with this draft regulation as it does not seem to meet this purpose. The labelling allowed following a technical notification with the EU Commission will be "UK" as that is the Member State. Any labelling giving the country of origin as Scotland will only be subject to any voluntary guidelines drawn up.

SCC believes it would be far simpler just to have these voluntary guidelines and to promote our high quality Scottish beef through the QMS assurance labels. .

I hope the above is useful and if you would like any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Martyn Evans
DIRECTOR

(1) SCC response to SEERAD consultation on Country of Origin of Beef in the Food Service Sector 13 May 2006