



FOOD LABELLING REFORM A MUST SAYS AMAG

THE Australian Made, Australian Grown Campaign (AMAG) believes it should be mandatory for all food products to carry a country of origin claim.

In its submission to the Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy AMAG also recommended the term 'Made in Australia' may only be used when the food product meets the full criteria set out in the Trade Practices Act.

AMAG also called for more stringent guidelines for country of origin claims so a food product which contains a high percentage of imported ingredients cannot legally be described as 'Australian made'.

The Food Standards Code, which requires some foods such as pork and seafood to carry a country of origin label, while others such as beef and chicken are exempt, is inconsistent and confusing, AMAG Chief Executive Ian Harrison says.

"There are growing concerns among consumers about where their fresh and processed foods come from. They are anxious about how safe the food they are buying is," Mr Harrison says.

"One of the primary purposes of food labelling is to provide consumers with enough information to enable them to make informed choices. Therefore, the rules should be consistent, clear and as simple as possible," Mr Harrison says.

Under the Trade Practices Act a food product can legally be described as 'Australian made' if it has been substantially transformed in Australia and at least 50% of the production costs have been incurred in Australia. The ACCC's country of origin guidelines allow a food product to carry a claim like 'Made in Australia from local and imported ingredients' if it doesn't meet the full criteria.

"The term 'Made in Australia' should not be allowed to be used in a qualified claim such as 'Made in Australia from local and imported ingredients' as shoppers find this unclear. Food products which don't meet the full criteria set out in the Trade Practices Act should be labelled with an alternative claim, for example 'packaged in' or 'blended in'," Mr Harrison says.

"Likewise, a food product should not be able to carry the 'Australian made' claim when it contains mainly imported ingredients which have simply been mixed or blended, seasoned, cured or homogenised here. Processes such as these should not be classed substantial transformation."

"We are in the process of amending the AMAG Code of Practice to exclude these processes from the definition of substantial transformation so when consumers see the AMAG logo they can be sure the major or characterising ingredient has been sourced locally and the product made or grown here."

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

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About Australian Made, Australian Grown: AMAG is a not-for-profit organisation that raises awareness of genuine Australian goods carrying the green and gold Australian country of origin logo. The AMAG logo is the most trusted and recognised country of origin symbol for Australia and can now be found on more than 10,000 products sold here and around the world. www.australianmade.com.au