



For immediate release
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Media Release: More food products to carry country of origin labels but better rules needed

The Australian Made, Australian Grown Campaign (AMAG) welcomes the Federal Government's move to improve country of origin labelling (CoOL) for food products but believes it doesn't go far enough.

The government, in its response to the Blewett Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy, has agreed with the Review's recommendation that Australia's existing CoOL requirements for food be extended to cover all primary food products for retail sale. At present, pork, seafood and fresh fruit and vegetables must be labelled with their country of origin, while beef, lamb and chicken are exempt.

The government has indicated that FSANZ is working to extend mandatory labelling to beef, lamb and chicken, but dairy products will continue to be exempt.

In welcoming the extension, AMAG Chief Executive, Ian Harrison, says he is unclear why dairy products will not be covered.

"It makes sense to have clear and consistent country of origin labelling for all food products because consumers want to know where their food comes from," Mr Harrison says.

The government has also said it will give further consideration to developing a consumer product information standard for food under the Competition and Consumer Act.

"This is the perfect opportunity to tighten up the rules around country of origin claims. Under the current law, homogenised milk, mixed diced vegetables, blended fruit juices, battered fish fillets, crumbed prawns and ham and bacon may all qualify as 'Australian Made' **even though all the major ingredients may be imported**, as long as at least 50% of the cost of production is incurred in Australia," Mr Harrison says.

"AMAG has already changed the rules for using the Australian Made logo to ensure it is not used on this type of product and we are calling on the government to follow our lead. It's time to tighten up the guidelines on what 'Australian Made' means.

"At least until that time, consumers can rely on the green and gold Australian Made, Australian Grown logo when they're shopping for authentic Australian products and produce."

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

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