



31 July 2018

S18.31

Submission to Primary Production Committee on its interim report on the Consumers' Right to Know (Country of Origin of Food) Bill

Introduction

- 0.1. The National Council of Women of New Zealand, Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa (NCWNZ) is an umbrella group representing 245 organisations affiliated at either national level or to one of our 19 branches. In addition, about 350 people are individual members. Collectively our reach is over 350,000 with many of our membership organisations representing all genders. NCWNZ's vision is a gender equal New Zealand and research shows we will be better off socially and economically if we are gender equal. Through research, discussion and action, NCWNZ in partnership with others, seeks to realise its vision of gender equality because it is a basic human right. This submission has been prepared by the NCWNZ Consumer Affairs and Economics Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Watch Committee and relates to the previous NCWNZ submission on the Consumers' Right to Know (Country of Origin of Food) Bill.¹
- 0.2. NCWNZ supported the introduction of this Bill and noted this had been the NCWNZ position for some time. For example, the 2010 submission on the Food Labelling Law and Policy Review noted "The most important message is to inform the consumer of the contents of the product and country of origin on the labels".²
- 0.3. NCWNZ appreciates the opportunity to comment on this Interim Report on the Committee's proposed recommendations for amendment to the Bill and trusts concerns raised regarding the recommendations will be noted and addressed before enactment of legislation on the Bill.
- 0.4. Overall NCWNZ believes the recommended changes to the Bill fail to address its importance and significance of the Bill and weaken the ability to fully achieve its purpose.

Clause 5 (3), (e), (i), (ii).

- 0.5. NCWNZ is concerned the proposed recommendations continue to exclude foods supplied, offered or advertised for supply for immediate consumption, a restaurant, cafeteria, takeaway shop, canteen or similar place, or a caterer or at a fundraising event. NCWNZ had previously submitted that the Bill

¹ 18 May 2017, Submission to the Primary Production Committee on the Consumer's Right to Know [Country of Origin of Food] Bill S.17.06

² S10.12 Food Labelling Law and Policy Review <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/S10.12-Food-Labelling-Law-and-Policy-Review.pdf>

ought to cover online purchasing of food, food purchased in restaurants and cafes or in advertising of foods.

Deletion of Part 2, Clause 9 Offences

- 0.6. NCWNZ is extremely concerned that the recommendations suggest clauses relating to Offences and Enforcement be deleted. NCWNZ had submitted that previous penalty levels appeared minimal and the removal of these totally does not appear to make sense. It is hoped that delegated Regulations will sufficiently address this.

Clause 6 - Minister's Recommendations

- 0.7. NCWNZ hopes that the Minister's recommendations will take into account the need for criteria to determine the legitimacy of information on country of origin needs to be evidence-based taking into account research on the methods of production.
- 0.8. NCWNZ believes information on country of origin should be readily provided within a set time frame should consumers request it, and that clarity of terminology is required. For example the difference between "Made in New Zealand" and "Product of New Zealand" may not be well understood by most consumers.
- 0.9. Furthermore, NCWNZ believes that information displayed needs to be readily visible and recommends a minimum font size to allow for a diverse range of consumers and their reading ability.
- 0.10. NCWNZ also recommends an advisory service be established where consumers and producers may seek advice and information on the requirement of any foods or food products to be labelled and in what manner the foods and food products are to be labelled.

Conclusion

- 0.11. Whilst NCWNZ continues to be supportive of this Bill and is pleased to see it progress through the Select Committee there is concern that the Committee's recommendations fail to incorporate key elements necessary to make the Bill meaningful to consumers.



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