



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TONY WINDSOR MP
INDEPENDENT
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

Shop 5
259 Peel Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

All Mail: PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ph: (02) 6761 3080

Toll Free: 1300 301 839

Fax: (02) 6761 3380

e-mail: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au

Web Page: www.tonywindsor.com.au

Media Release

17 March 2009

Breakthrough in national meat labelling laws Agriculture Minister Burke agrees to put on next Ministerial Council meeting

In a breakthrough for national meat labelling laws that will give consumers confidence in the quality of the meat they are buying is as portrayed on the label, the Federal Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke announced today that he is putting it on the next Ministerial Council meeting's agenda.

Answering a question from the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor, Minister Burke indicated that the issue was important and agreed that such national laws are needed.

Mr Windsor said that Minister Burke's answer was the first time that the Federal Minister had agreed to refer the Richard Torbay Food Labelling Legislation to the Primary Industry Ministerial Council.

"The Ministerial Council has the capacity to broaden the truth in labelling issue from the NSW level to a national level.

"I congratulate Mr Torbay on his efforts to push his proposal at the NSW State level.

"His "Food Amendment (Meat Grading) Bill 2008", which will be debated in the NSW Parliament this year, is not only a win for consumers but also producers and their representative organisations who have been calling for it for years.

There are claims that under the existing voluntary scheme some retailers sell "budget" beef as "prime cuts" and others use the official AUS-code meat labelling language regardless of whether the beef meets the required standard. Within the industry misleading labels such as "export quality" or "this week's special" are often considered suspicious and a trap for consumers," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that now is the time to progress Mr Torbay's Bill to the next stage and give consumers and producers clear and transparent market signals.

"The meat industry needs to have consumer confidence in that what consumers buy and pay a certain price for, is what is shown on the label.

"It is in the meat industry's best interest for national labelling laws to be brought in and I congratulate and encourage the Minister to lead the way on this issue," Mr Windsor said.

../2

For further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 66 8868

Question from Mr Windsor and Minister Burke's answer follows:

Question from Tony Windsor MP

Mr Speaker my question is to the Minister for Agriculture and relates to NSW Independent MP Richard Torbay's "Truth in Meat Labelling Bill" which would make it an offence to falsely describe meat including beef, sheep meat, goat and pig meat advertising packaging and labelling.

Given that beef producers for instance in NSW are currently being disadvantaged by voluntary labelling that isn't enforceable and given that this issue is bigger than just NSW, what will the Federal Government be doing to address this issue at a national level?

Will the Minister bite the bullet on this issue and ignore some sectors of the meat industry who have railed against truth in labelling for their own purposes and provide some leadership at a national level?

Minister for Agriculture, the Hon Tony Burke

.... The question that the Member for New England raises is an important one. He's right in the need for national coordination – some of the powers on this exist at a state level - some at a federal level - For that reason I have put it on the agenda for the next Ministerial Council.