



RICK WILSON MP

Federal Member for O'Connor



MEDIA RELEASE

Country of origin food labelling enquiry

13 May 2014: Federal Member for O'Connor Rick Wilson has expressed concern about current food labelling laws, following public hearings in Sydney last week.

Mr Wilson said there was some evidence that a loophole in current food labelling laws enable some importers of food goods to circumvent Australia's country of origin labelling requirements by staging imports through a third party country.

As a member of the House of Representatives' Agriculture and Industry Standing Committee, Mr Wilson attended the Sydney hearings of the *country of origin food labelling enquiry*, which was established in March in response to concerns over the current Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) laws.

Mr Wilson said there is also public confusion over the 'Made in Australia', 'Product from Australia' and 'Made from Australian and Imported Ingredients' labels.

"As a farmer who understands the need for Australian foods to be competitive in the market-place I want to make sure Australian agricultural producers are protected through the CoOL laws and that the potential for misleading conduct in the labelling of products is reduced."

Mr Wilson said an example of the confusion was the current labelling of pork.

"Seventy percent of our pork is imported, but imported pork 'middles' that are processed into bacon can be labelled 'Made in Australia'," Mr Wilson said.

"I want all consumers to purchase Australian-made products but they should be able to do so based on accurate information. Hopefully this enquiry will allow us to remove any previous confusion over food labelling," he said.

Chairman of the Agriculture and Industry Standing Committee Rowan Ramsey MP said, "Submissions made to the inquiry have clearly demonstrated that Australians want to be able to make informed choices about the food they buy."

All public hearings will be webcast live at: www.aph.gov.au/live and further details about the inquiry, including submissions received and the terms of reference can be obtained from the committee's website at: www.aph.gov.au/agind

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Notes to the Editor:

The terms of reference provided for the committee to inquire into and report on are:

- Whether the current Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL for food) system provides enough information for Australian consumers to make informed purchasing decisions;
- Whether Australia's CoOL laws are being complied with and, what, if any, are the practical limitations to compliance;
- Whether improvements could be made, including to simplify the current system and / or reduce the compliance burden;
- Whether Australia's CoOL laws are being circumvented by staging imports through third countries; and
- The impact on Australia's international trade obligation of any proposed changes to Australia's CoOL laws.