

Gregor Riese

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir Madam

Definitions of meat and other animal products

While welcoming more choice for the consumer, I feel the processed food industry cannot be trusted to responsibly brand their products so that the average consumer knows they are not buying a meat substitute product. The current branding of these products suggest very strongly that they are made of animal ingredients while containing no such ingredients.

The failure to clearly distinguish between these types of products could have long-term negative health consequences for the Australian community in a significant way. The consumption of highly processed meat substitutes, many with ingredients that read like industry chemical compounds more suited to the factory floor than the dinner plate, could have a range of currently unknown health impacts detrimental to human health.

By way of analogy, I would remind the Committee of the uptake of so called 'healthy' margarine products in the 1980s and 1990, sold to consumers as being better for their health than butter, but loaded with toxic trans-fats which increased the risk of developing heart disease and stroke. As an average consumer, many would have purchased margarine and butter interchangeably because of the confusing labelling of the products at the time (I recall one called "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter").

I consider the Committee should recommend labelling standards for non-meat products that leaves no doubt in the consumers mind that these processed foods contain no animal products. Terms such as sausage, rissole, steak, meat, chops, patties etc, should be quarantined for meat products only.

Kind regards

Gregor Riese