

Organisation: Moo-ers Steakhouse
Written by: Robert Patterson



477 The Entrance rd Long Jetty 2261 4333 6767
www.mooers.com.au

May 1st 2008

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport,

Please find enclosed a submission on the Inquiry into Meat Marketing, on the behalf of Moo-ers Steakhouse. Moo-ers is located at Long Jetty, on the NSW Central Coast and specialises in steak and seafood, but also offers a broad range of meals including lamb, veal and pork dishes. Moo-ers interest in this submission is: We often receive meats from a number of suppliers and it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell what type of quality will be delivered due to the looseness of definitions, and laws for meat.

As such the submission covers the substitution of hogget and mutton meat for lamb, also the substitution of yearling for veal. Other issues covered include, the need for a unilateral description of beef cuts and the defining of meats and their characteristics.

Moo-ers Steakhouse would appreciate any information about the outcome of this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,
Moo-ers Steakhouse

Organisation: Moo-ers Steakhouse
Written by: Robert Patterson

Organisation: Moo-ers Steakhouse

Submission Topic: Meat Marketing Inquiry

By Robert Patterson, with assistance from Cassy Toms and John Patterson

Submission closing date: May 2, 2008

Table of contents:

| Subject | Page number |
|---|-------------|
| Executive summary | 5 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| Main arguments: - 1.1 - 1.2 | - 7 - 8 |
| Main arguments: - 1.3 - 1.4 | - 8 - 9 |
| conclusion | 10 |
| Recommendations - 2.1 - 2.2 - 2.3 - 2.4 | 11 |
| References | 12 |

Organisation: Moo-ers Steakhouse

Written by: Robert Patterson

Executive Summary:

The main arguments Moo-ers Steakhouse wishes to address are:

- The need for a unilateral system for describing meat cuts
- The substitution of some meats for others
- The correct naming of beef products
- A consistent way of defining meats and the way the animal has being raised.

A more unilateral definition of meat cuts on a national scale would provide people with an indication of what they are getting, further enabling them to provide a product which is of consistently high quality. As it currently stands the definition of beef cuts is extremely loose, for example: Different areas/suppliers call their steaks sirloin, porterhouse and striploin; but these are the exact same cut of beef.

The correct naming of meat products has been a large problem for a long time. For example, the labelling of veal and lamb is a huge concern in the industry. Yearling can often be labelled as veal which is a much tougher, less tasteful product whereas hogget and mutton are often misrepresented as lamb. There need to be strict laws made concerning the naming of products and guidelines for things such as age. These should be enforced on a national basis.

Defining of meat products and the way in which they have being raised is a huge issue as the environment from which meat comes often can tell a great deal about the texture, flavour and overall quality of the meat. As such there should be a general outline for titles such as free range, as well as specific rules for certain meats. The distributors should also have to clearly label their product with details of the animal's environmental factors such as grain fed or grass fed. This would ensure a high consistency and would also make it easier for restaurants and butchers to guarantee a high quality.

Organisation: Moo-ers Steakhouse

Written by: Robert Patterson

Introduction:

Moo-ers Steakhouse welcomes the opportunity to comment on The Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport's inquiry into Meat Marketing. Given that red meats mostly beef, but also pork and lamb make up a large amount of The Moo-ers menu this is an issue of vital importance to the business.

Moo-ers Steakhouse would like to argue that there should be stricter national guidelines for the branding and marketing of meats, so they can ensure the quality of their product is at a high standard. This is of vital importance to Moo-ers Steakhouse as we pride ourselves on having quality meats of a consistently high standard.

Moo-ers Steakhouse feels that in order to achieve a consistently high standard of branding and marketing, there is a need for more effective supervision of national standards. One significant area cited by Moo-ers executive chef (Cassy Toms) and manager (John Patterson) is the coding and labelling of beef products. They are of the opinion that strict guidelines need to be laid out and enforced in the area of labelling meats. This would stop lesser meats such as yearling, from being misrepresented as veal.

A key issue needing the committee's attention is the, necessity for unilateral descriptions of beef cuts. Moo-ers management argues that many beef cuts, such as sirloin, porterhouse and striploin are the exact same cuts, but are named differently depending where, and who it is brought from. This creates problems when trying to predict the quality of a cut when ordering meats.

These issues have created continuous problems for the management at Moo-ers over the last five years. Furthermore, manager and head chef, John Patterson argues that this has been a major problem for the length of his career in the hospitality industry, which is over 30 years. It is impossible to guarantee a certain quality of meat when the labelling and coding is not strict and the definition of cuts is extremely loose. These issues caused Moo-ers Steakhouse to recommend the Central Coast branch of the Restaurant and Catering Organisation (R&C) yields a submission to the Meat Marketing Inquiry. However, the Restaurant and Catering's inaction led the management and staff of Moo-ers Steakhouse to voice their own opinions

Main arguments:

The major issues in meat marketing which Moo-ers Steakhouse wishes to make apparent to the committee are:

- 1.1: The correct naming of beef products:

During the five years that Moo-ers Steakhouse has been open and the 30 plus years, Manager, John Patterson has being in the hospitality industry this has been a continuous issue. For example the correct labelling of veal, in particular, has being cited by Moo-ers staff as a major problem for them in determining the quality, and taste of their final product. They argue there should be consistent branding of meats across states and different suppliers of meats, and that these strict rules should be heavily monitored to ensure there is consistency in the product being received.

The aging for veal should be from cow calves, which are six to eleven months old; in many cases Moo-ers has received meat branded as veal which clearly does not fit this guideline. It is quite often what should be classed as yearling; calf aged 12-18 months. This meat obviously has a different taste and texture to veal and may cause customers to be put off the meals served using this product if it is not the right meat.

There needs to be legislation put in place, giving specific ages for veal and yearling such as those mentioned above. There should be guidelines for all beef products veal and yearling are just a relevant example of what is currently taking place in the meat industry. These guidelines should be heavily monitored, and focus solely on beef products. They would need to be highly specialised. This specificity to beef would drastically cut down the use of yearling for veal. It would further ensure that the laws are effectively controlling the beef industry. Age limits should be set for veal and yearling and they should be enforced emphatically. This would make it much more reliable and easy for businesses to maintain a high quality product on a consistent basis.

- 1.2 :Substitution of hogget and mutton meats for lamb:

Organisation: Moo-ers Steakhouse

Written by: Robert Patterson

A key issue still regarding the naming of meat products is the use of hogget meat and to a lesser extent, mutton meat for lamb. This is a major issue because the flavour and texture of the meat varies greatly from one to the other. The quality of the meat greatly differs depending which supplier it is obtained from. This can turn people off lamb because they think they are eating lamb, when they are in fact eating a much tougher, drier hogget or mutton meat. Therefore it becomes increasingly difficult to guarantee a constantly high quality meal when there is no guarantee of a constantly high quality meat being delivered. Therefore there should be strict regulations for the use of lamb, mutton and hogget meat. These regulations should also have a high specificity as to make sure that they are effectively controlling the lamb industry. They should set out definite age limits for lamb, hogget and mutton meats and enforce the misuse of these meats with harsh consequences. This is the most effective way to make sure these meats are being labelled correctly and to ensure satisfaction on every level of consumption.

- 1.3: The need for a unilateral description of meat cuts:

Moo-ers Steakhouse is of the opinion that the description for beef cuts is extremely loose. For example there needs to be a more defined description of what exactly the beef is. Different areas/suppliers call their steaks sirloin, porterhouse and striploin; however these are the exact same cut of beef. There also is no emphasis on how the beef has being raised. For example there are grain fed, or grass fed cattle. Cassy Toms argues that the grass fed cows provide a much more flavoursome steak than the grain fed. However these are rarely labelled as such and therefore it is often difficult to get consistency from the same supplier, let alone different suppliers. This is because there is no ruling stating the contents of a steak and how the cow has being catered for during its life, is to be made available. This is an issue because it often makes guaranteeing the texture, flavour and quality of a steak impossible.

As such there should be a system set out in which meats have to be clearly labelled. This should be a highly specific system which defines exactly what parameters make a certain cut. These should also include details such as whether the cattle was grain or grass fed, if it was raised as free range or force fed. This would allow people to better distinguish what quality of meat they are getting before it arrives. Thus making it easier for the restaurant, or any business to better describe and cater for the beef they are serving

- 1.4: Defining meats and their characteristics:

This argument basically focuses on a need for specific guidelines which need to be enforced on the definition of “Free Range” meats such as pork. While this is a similar problem to the labelling, Moo-ers Steakhouse feels that this is an important issue which needs to be individually addressed. Furthermore the free range definitions should be individualised depending on the meat in question i.e. pork, chicken, beef etc. The increased specificity would allow for effective controlling of the labelling of something as free range. There should be definite guidelines such as those set out by Australian Pork Limited (APL). These laws should be nation wide, making it easier to ensure a consistently high quality. The APL is the peak body for pork in Australia; it describes free range as pork derived from animals with:

- adherence to humane animal practices
- Continuous free access” to outdoor areas
- Shelter
- The term free range can only be used when both the growing pigs and their mothers have been kept under these conditions.

Although this is the peak body for pork in Australia, these standards are not nationally recognised or enforced.

As has being stated in every argument so far there should be a large emphasis on the need for the laws to be nation so consumers can be sure of what they are getting, and suppliers be sure of what they are supplying. To make this more specific and detailed there needs to be individualised laws for different types of meats.

Organisation: Moo-ers Steakhouse
Written by: Robert Patterson

Conclusion:

The main arguments Moo-ers Steakhouse would like to bring to the committee's attention are: The need for a more unilateral description of meat cuts, and that the labelling of meat products like lamb and veal need stricter labelling so that their quality is ensured. There is a need to pay specific attention to the title 'free range' as well as the defining of how an animal is reared, as this can say a lot about the flavour and texture of the meat. Furthermore there should be a focus on specific animals for each of the above topics, this specificity will ensure a consistently high quality of meat is being used at all levels.

Recommendations:

- 2.1: That there should be a unilateral system of describing meat cuts, which is nation wide and heavily enforced:
- 2.2: That there should be strict guidelines on beef products, these should be nation wide and heavily enforced:
- 2.3: That strict regulations for lamb meat, mostly regarding the substitution of hogget and mutton meat for lamb:
- 2.4: That Free range laws, be created and enforced on a national level:

Organisation: Moo-ers Steakhouse
Written by: Robert Patterson

References:

Australian Pork Limited website - extracted April 6th 2008.

<http://www.apl.au.com/index.cfm?id=3C077995-9027-E533-1FCCD001922776FE>

Free Range Pork Farmers Association Newsletter, March 2008, extracted 6th April 2008.

<http://www.freerangeporkfarmers.com.au/newslettermarch08.pdf>

Sheepmeat Council of Australia website, extracted April 9th 2008.

<http://www.sheepmeatcouncil.com.au/>