

New Food Labelling Regime Comes In Half Cooked

Wednesday 22 July 2015

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) – which represents workers in food manufacturing and packaging – has called the Government's surprise food labeling announcement 'half cooked'.

A surprise announcement yesterday saw the Prime Minister announce the new labeling regime earlier than expected, following a large public survey on the issue, which had around 17,000 responses.

"The proposed labeling clearly promotes Australian Grown, Made and Packaged, which is a good thing," said AMWU Food Secretary Tom Hale.

"However it does not require the labeling of Country of Origin for countries *other* than Australia to be clearly displayed. Nor

"This means consumers are still without the ability to easily determine which country or countries the food they are buying comes from."

If a packaged product had the claim "Made in Australia from 50% Australian ingredients" consumers can be pleased that the product is supporting Australian manufacturing jobs. But they have no idea what country or countries the other 50% of the food comes from – which can make a big difference to food safety and preference.

"We agree with other groups, including AusVeg, who have said these are not genuine Country of Origin labels," said Mr Hale.

"We are also concerned to see if there is a minimum size that the labels must be – which is a crucial part of the labeling regime."

The union has been campaigning for clearer and more transparent food labeling for many years. Clear labeling of country of origin has long been shown to support Australia's food manufacturing industry as well as Australian farmers and growers, as consumers show a marked preference to buy locally grown and made products.

Media Comment: John Hill – 0412 197 079