

12 June 2018

To all SAGE Farmers Market Stall Holders

REMINDER – Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL)

If you haven't prepared for this, then it's time to get onto it, because everyone – yes, *everyone* – will be required to label *all* their products with Country of Origin from **1st July** this year.

There are very few exceptions: alcoholic beverages, tea & coffee, biscuits, seasonings, confectionery and snack foods. Everything else will be labelled and/or clearly identified with Country of Origin.

This will be reasonably simple for fruit & vegetable growers, not too complicated for meat producers (primary producers), but a bit of work for value-adders (secondary producers).

There are plenty of easy-to-use resources for producers to help you get your head around what's required and how you can create the signage and labelling you need to comply with the new regulations.

As with any labelling or other regulatory requirements, the market is not accountable for your responsibilities as a food retailer. You must make sure you have informed yourself and taken the necessary steps to ensure you are meeting Country of Origin labelling requirements or face the wrath of the ACCC.

Here are the links to help you:

<http://www.foodlabels.industry.gov.au/>

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/labelling/coo/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.accc.gov.au/publications/country-of-origin-food-labelling> (includes PDF guidebook)

And this one is an online tool to help you work out what labels you need and what to put on them:

<http://www.originlabeltool.business.gov.au/>

There's a lot of information out there to help you, but these links should provide enough to get you sorted.

Good luck.

More labelling regulations for free range eggs

The Australian Consumer and Competition Commission's new information standard around claims of free range eggs took effect on **26th April 2018**.

Eggs sold at all retailing outlets, including farmers markets, as free range must now meet the following labelling and signage requirements (from the ACCC Enforcement Guidance document):

"The Standard requires that if egg producers sell packaged eggs and use the words 'free range' on their packaging, they must state the stocking density prominently on the packaging.

"If egg producers sell their eggs unpackaged and use the words 'free range', the Standard requires that they prominently display a sign containing the words 'free range' and that the sign prominently states the outdoor stocking density. Further, if unpackaged eggs other than 'free range' eggs are being displayed at or near the display of 'free range' eggs, the display of 'free range' eggs must be separate from the display of other eggs, so that a person at or near the displays can reasonably distinguish between 'free range' and other eggs.

"[The ACCC] consider that words on packaging or signs are prominent if a person looking at the packaging or signage can easily find and read them."

See the full document here (those are not spaces, they're underscores):

https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/1349_ACCC%20Enforcement%20Guide_Free%20range%20chicken%20egg%20claims_FA2.pdf

Free range egg producers are also cautioned to be authentic in their use of images to promote their product or risk transgressing the new laws.

Even more regulation changes, this time for home based food businesses

From **1st July 2018**, local councils will regulate all domestic kitchens where food that will be sold directly to the final consumer is prepared.

The NSW Food Authority will continue to regulate domestic kitchens that only sell food to other businesses, such as cafés, restaurants and supermarkets.

When a food business sells direct to the final customer (e.g. from the premises or from a market/school canteen etc.), local councils will regulate these home-based businesses. **The business needs to notify the local council of their business and food activity details.**

From 1 September 2015, notification is satisfied via applications to local council for services, permits and approvals, and through rates notice registrations.

You might like to contact your local council for further clarification of how the changes effect your business.

There is a NSW Food Authority factsheet available at (those are not spaces, they're underscores):

http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/retailfactsheets/home_based_food_businesses.pdf

For more detailed information about home based food businesses generally, you can visit the NSW Food Authority website here:

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/retail/home-based-mixed-businesses>

That's all for now.

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