



Truth in Labelling

Truth in labelling legislation protects consumers from misleading packaging, empowering them to drive change by making animal-friendly choices.

Lifting the veil of secrecy

Today very few animals roam freely on traditional farms. Most animals produced for food in Australia are raised on factory farms where they are confined in cages or packed together in such large numbers they struggle to find space to move. Because this treatment occurs behind the closed doors of factory farms, many consumers don't have a true understanding of the pain and suffering endured by animals raised for food.

In Australia, consumer misperceptions are enabled and exacerbated by weak labelling legislation which does not require producers to adequately disclose information about production methods.

Industry has long taken advantage of the gaps in legislation by hiding behind sanitised packaging which uses positive imagery and ambiguous terms like 'farm fresh' or 'naturally perfect' to describe animal-derived food products. In this way, producers shield consumers from the realities of intensive farming practices.

The rise of consumer action

Thankfully, consumers are becoming more conscious of the physical and psychological suffering endured by animals in the production of meat, dairy and egg products in Australia. An increasing number of consumers are willing to pay for more humanely produced alternatives at the checkout, or are cutting out animal-derived food products altogether.

An ethical food movement has emerged in Australia and consumers are increasingly calling for reforms to enable them to make more animal-friendly food choices. Essential to this call is the demand for truth in labelling legislation.

Putting truth back on the label

There are a number of terms currently used to differentiate the source of animal-derived food products. These include caged eggs, battery eggs, barn laid eggs, free range eggs, open-range or range eggs, grain fed, free range, free to roam, bred free range, organic and biodynamic.

While widely used in marketing and packaging, most of these terms are not defined in nationally consistent legislation, which means there is broad scope for consumer uncertainty as to their true meaning.

Voiceless believes that consumers need a nationally consistent approach to labelling legislation, which includes a mandatory labelling regime for all animal products. This system should outline a uniform set of defined terms that are linked to uniform animal protection standards and an enforcement system that will ensure compliance.

Effective, enforceable and nationally consistent truth in labelling legislation enables consumers to make informed and animal-friendly food choices.

The purchasing power generated by those choices has the potential to influence industry practices and improve the lives of millions of animals raised for food in Australia.

