

New food labels show appetite for change

July 1 2016



Credit: University of Queensland

New federal government country of origin food labels are a good start, but there is plenty of scope to go even further according to a University of Queensland researcher.

The new labelling laws will come into effect today and UQ Global Change Institute Director of Food Systems Professor Bill Bellotti said there was a growing argument for the labels to provide more [information](#) to consumers.

"Australians have the right to information on environmental impacts, ethical consequences and the sustainability of their [food](#) choices,"

Professor Bellotti said.

"The new food labels are a direct response to public concerns after the imported frozen berries scandal, but the government also needs to consider not just how the foods we eat are impacting our personal health but also on the health of the planet.

"This is because our food choices are responsible for 70 per cent of fresh water use, 30 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, and the large majority of land use.

"The way we eat determines to a large extent how the earth's resources are used. Small changes in our diet can have big benefits for our health and for the health of the planet.

"There is a growing trend globally for consumers to want more information about what they are eating and the easiest way to source this information is often from food labels.

"Most people don't have time to read a long and complicated message, so a good label is clear and has the impact to change the way people shop at the point of purchase."

He said Australians had been grappling with food labelling for decades, but with mixed success.

"We learnt from the National Heart Foundation Tick that Australians don't want [health labels](#) that can be bought by food manufacturers," he said.

Professor Bellotti said it was vital the Australian food export market stayed ahead of trends to ensure it could exploit lucrative international markets.

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: New food labels show appetite for change (2016, July 1) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-07-food-appetite.html>

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