

To whom it may concern at FSANZ: submissions@foodstandards.gov.au

Cc: All Members of Food Regulation Ministerial Council: foodregulationsecretariat@health.gov.au

Date:

RE: Labelling review recommendation 34 - irradiation labelling

I am writing to share my concerns re the “Review of mandatory labelling of irradiated food” currently being undertaken by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). I am disappointed that FSANZ is considering removing labelling from food that has been irradiated when it is clear that both the public and world standards demand that it be labelled.

I choose to not eat irradiated food. If, for some reason, I were to consider eating something irradiated, I would expect it to be clearly labelled.

After reviewing labelling requirements in a “number of countries,” FSANZ states: it is common for a mandatory statement to indicate that the food has been irradiated... (*All Public Consultation Paper p10*). In Australia and New Zealand, all irradiation permits have been premised on the basis of irradiated food being labelled as such.

I am alarmed that the Ministerial Council, armed with this knowledge is considering denying the public information through labelling.

Irradiation is now being promoted as a quarantine measure. The irradiation of foods approved in Australia involves their exposure to the energy equivalent of between 1.5 and 10 million x-rays. Irradiation is known to deplete vitamin and nutrient content and to alter a product’s molecular structure - with potentially serious consequences. As the changes made to food cannot be discerned with our ordinary senses, labelling is the only means to differentiate between irradiated and non-irradiated products.

In a free market economy, the demand for irradiated products should be driven by consumers making informed and intentional decisions to purchase such products – not by being tricked in to buying them. Irradiators who are confident that their products are wholesome, healthy and desirable should be proud to label their products irradiated and let the market play out.

Australian and New Zealand labelling standards already fall short of world standards. Rather than being removed, labelling should be improved to prescribe clear and accurate statements such as: “Irradiated –” or “Treated with irradiation.”

With Australia and New Zealand increasing the amount of irradiated foods available on the market and in people’s diets, the push to remove mandatory labelling and signage requirements is unacceptable - and must be stopped.

I look forward to hearing your response to these matters and to working with you to ensure that people are informed about what they eat through good labelling.

Thank you,

Name:

Email or other address:

Other comments: