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Competition and Consumer Policy  
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment  
PO Box 1473  
Wellington 6140  
[consumer@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:consumer@mbie.govt.nz)

To the MBIE

I was shocked to learn that most pork is exempt from country of origin labelling. It is vital that all meat has country of origin labelling so that consumers can make an informed choice.

Imported pork products come into New Zealand without having to meet New Zealand's animal welfare standards. Also imported pork is often cheaper than New Zealand pork because many overseas countries pay subsidies to their farmers, which reduces the costs of farming. As well, the very great majority of imported pork is farmed in countries with lower welfare standards, which also reduces their cost of production.

The volume of imported pork is increasing each year, meaning the New Zealand pork industry struggles to compete with cheap imports. I am concerned about the unfair advantage given to countries which do not have high animal welfare standards, but I am even more concerned about the animals themselves.

It is quite unethical for us to turn a blind eye to this – New Zealand legislature passed a law a year ago recognising all animals as sentient beings. To say that animals are sentient is to state explicitly that they can experience both positive and negative emotions, including pain and distress.

Another good reason for labelling the country of origin for meat is that US production is very often grain-fed, and animals are kept confined in feed lots. People need to know whether the meat they eat has been raised naturally on pasture or in unnatural feed lot conditions. Even if this is not explicitly stated, there is a good indication coming from the country of origin.

While my submission has focused on meat, I wish it to be understood that I consider ALL food should be clearly labelled with the country of origin. To say that it is produced in New Zealand from local and imported ingredients is an obvious avoidance of this principle.

Yours sincerely,  
Marion Sallis