



Kindness House
18/288 Brunswick St
Fitzroy Victoria 3065

1 May 2008

Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Secretary,

Submission to the inquiry into the branding and marketing of meat

1. Lawyers for Animals wishes to make a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport's current inquiry into the branding and marketing of meat.
2. Lawyers for Animals is a not-for-profit incorporated association run by a management committee of lawyers. Its objectives include: alleviating the suffering of animals by engaging with those who create or administer laws in Australia to strengthen legal protection for animals; and promoting better animal welfare practices amongst animal-related industries in Australia.
3. During the course of our work, Lawyers for Animals has become aware of the immense legislative inconsistency and confusion that exists in Australia with regard to the branding and marketing of meat.
4. Lawyers for Animals submits that there is urgent need for legislative reform to ensure adequate definitions of production methods such as 'free-range', 'organic', 'grain fed' and 'biodynamic'. These definitions should be linked to consistent national standards, including animal welfare standards, so as to provide consumers with protection and confidence and an increased ability to make suitably informed choices.
5. At present, the lack of legislated definition of production methods deprives consumers

of meaningful choice. The current requirement to describe ingredients on packaging enables consumers to choose products that accord with their health needs and ethical beliefs. In a similar way, legislated definitions of production methods would enable consumers to meaningfully choose the production methods that best fit with their ethical and environmental concerns, health preferences and budgetary constraints.

6. **Lawyers for Animals** urges the Senate Committee to explore all options available to it to ensure reform of all State and Territory statutes and regulations applying to food labelling, branding and marketing to ensure truth in labelling for animal-derived food products.
7. Towards this, **Lawyers for Animals** highly recommends the Committee examine the report prepared by Voiceless, the fund for animals, in 2007: *From Label to Liable: Scams, Scandals and Secrecy; Lifting the Veil on Animal-Derived Food Product Labeling in Australia*. This report is available at: http://www.voiceless.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=459&Itemid=388.
8. **Lawyers for Animals** also supports Humane Society International's call for the Senate Committee to extend the issue of branding and marketing in a future inquiry to deal with truth in labelling of all grocery items where there is a potential environmental or ethical impact.
9. **Lawyers for Animals** thanks you for considering this submission and would be pleased to discuss these issues further with the Committee at any stage.

Yours faithfully

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President

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