MELBOURNE COMMUNITY FARMERS' MARKETS www.mfm.com.au

26 October 2012

To: Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

I wish to add my support to Senator Christine Milne's Bill to the Senate for Country of Origin Labelling. Plain English, simple honest food labelling is vital to the protection and promotion of this country's food supply and its producers. Consumers should have the right to know what they are buying, particularly when they are eager to buy from local growers and processors. Current laws allow for ambiguity, confusion and skewed claims which hide the origin of food ingredients and fresh produce.

As the co-ordinator of 5 Melbourne farmers markets, I represent approximately 1000 farmers and food producers. We are dedicated to clear information and large print so the public can recognise what they are buying, and how proud we are to produce it. As a consumer I want to be fully and fairly informed about the origins of food and food ingredients, on the labels.

Specific examples would be:

- Harvest dates for fresh produce
- Country of origin on fresh produce, loose processed foods (ie delicatessen meats) and fresh meat
- Free range or feedlot information on fresh and processed meat products
- Clarity around 'Imported and local ingredient' proportions
- Fat free and percentage claims
- Clear sodium and sugar content coding on breakfast cereals, snack foods and all biscuits

As an Executive Member of the Victorian Farmers Market Association, I suggest that you to request a copy of the 'Glossary of Food Terms' document, currently in draft form, which has been developed in consultation of numerous food industry representative groups and CHOICE consumer advocates.

I welcome the opportunity to make this submission and would be very pleased to be contacted for further consultation and involvement.

Yours sincerely,

MIRANDA SHARP