

FOOD LABELLING — MINISTER'S POLICY

4969. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

Given the Minister's statements that farmers should have freedom of choice on what they wish to grow; that is, genetically modified (GM) or non-GM crops, I ask:

- (a) what is the Minister's policy position on food labelling;
- (b) why will the Minister not support the labelling of end food products, such as pork, that have been sustained by GM feed (for example, pigs that have been fed GM lupins); and
- (c) does the Minister support the labelling of food to identify ingredients such as peanuts and GM produced products?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (a) I support the Australian food labelling system which is overseen by Food Standards Australia New Zealand.
- (b) Safety and public health are the main drivers for food labelling. The recent review of food labelling law and policy stated "it seems unnecessary to pursue GM events down the food chain (e.g., animals having eaten GM feed). This would be unduly onerous, not justified by the present state of knowledge and is required by no country in the world".
- (c) As noted above, I support the Australian food labelling system. Under this system, foods which contain peanuts must be labelled. Foods which contain novel DNA or protein or have altered characteristics must also be labelled. There are exemptions to these requirements for:
 - Flavours which contain GM material but do not exceed a level of one part in a thousand in the final food; and
 - If a food, ingredient or processing aid includes unintentional traces of GM at 1 per cent or less by weight per ingredient.